

TOP STORY: *Beware of bankers bearing gifts*

January 25 - February 7, 1993

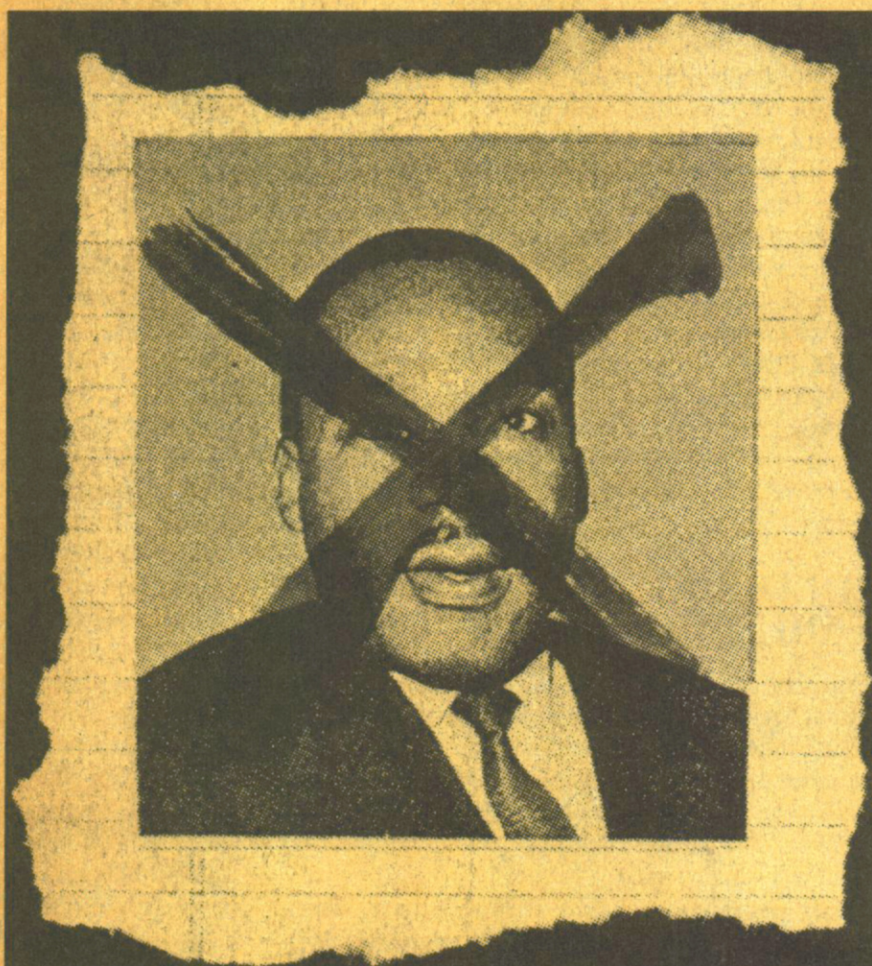
In THESE TIMES

the alternative newsmagazine

*S*ocialized
medicine
would
save lives,
save money
and save
Clinton's
posterity.

PAGE 18

MARKED MAN



*Amid rising Malcolm-mania,
Martin Luther King is a target of scorn.*

SALIM MUWAKKIL

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EDITORIAL

BONDS OF FRIENDSHIP MEET THE BONDS OF COMMERCE

Every day, somewhere in our nation, the human indignities of our system of health care for profit are played out in quiet desperation. But every now and then a single case will expose the cruel absurdities of the free market when applied to basic human needs. One such case was brought to light by the Louisiana Health Care Coalition on January 8, when Benny Milligan and James McElveen entered a federal prison in Carville, La., to serve nine- and seven-month terms for fraud.

Their offense was committed during a 1990 vacation in Tennessee, after McElveen was severely injured in a 30-foot tumble over a waterfall. At the hospital, Milligan switched identities with his friend and had him admitted under his name because McElveen had no health insurance and Milligan feared his friend might die without immediate attention. Milligan was subsequently charged \$49,000 for the care given McElveen, and in 1991 the two men and Milligan's wife Tammie were convicted by a Tennessee jury of fraud and conspiracy to commit fraud. The case, of course, was cut and dried. Milligan had committed the unpardonable offense of violating a sacred commercial contract, and his wife and McElveen—though unconscious at the time—had helped him conspire to do so.

This case, along with millions of others, illustrates why we need universal, free health care in this country. Many of the other reasons are spotlighted in this issue on page 18.

NEEDED: A NEW VISION FOR MILITARY POLICY

At his recent confirmation hearing, President Clinton's Defense Secretary Les Aspin testified that the Bush military budget for the next six years may have underestimated weapons costs. That may mean, Aspin implied, that the paltry \$12 billion per year cuts in the \$280 billion military budget that Clinton promised may be more than Aspin will want to make.

In his day of testimony before friendly Senate hawks, Aspin reaffirmed his support of Star Wars, though probably as a land-based program, gave no indication that the new administration would take the lead in stopping the international arms trade and observed that he might favor using force "not to achieve something but to punish people for doing certain things" that big daddy doesn't like. In short, Aspin lacks the post-Cold War vision thing just as George

Bush did. Aspin, it seems, promises business as usual.

The good news is—or, at least, may be—that Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA) will now head the House Armed Services Committee, and that pressure for some real changes may come from the more thoughtful members of Congress.

First among the needed changes is an end to the international arms trade that has fueled the excesses of countless local wars in recent years, most notably in Iraq and Somalia. Yet the United States has taken the lead in this trade since the end of the Cold War, so much so that it has squeezed others out. In the Mideast, for example, U.S. arms sales, which had slipped to \$11.7 billion in 1989, were boosted to more than \$35 billion last year after President Bush ordered his ambassadors in the region to give more help to American arms exporters.

It would, of course, not end the arms trade if the U.S. simply stopped selling or giving arms to client governments. But our dominant position in the trade—not to mention the other ways we impose our will on other nations—could be used to negotiate a drastic reduction in arms sales by all others. We have earlier proposed that the U.S. could stop the sale of surplus arms by the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries by buying them ourselves, thereby providing needed economic aid to those countries and reducing world armaments.

Second, Star Wars and all related nuclear arms research and development should be ended. With the elimination of the only potentially hostile power capable of large-scale nuclear attack on the U.S. there is no defense need for further nuclear technology or weapons development. The idea that we need Star Wars for defense against some small hostile power that might develop an atom bomb is absurd on its face. The fact is that no country on Earth could now attack us and survive the retaliation of which we are already capable. The need now is to work diligently to roll back nuclear capabilities of all nations and to seek binding agreements on ending nuclear arms development.

Third, the military budget should be cut drastically—by at least a third initially and by half or more over the next five years. This should begin with weapons production and development and reductions in the incredibly top-heavy military bureaucracy in Washington, where there are some 116,000 high-paid civilian and uniformed military personnel. The armed forces themselves could be reduced more slowly as jobs increase in the civilian sector. The \$90 billion to \$140 billion saved each year on military spending could be used for infrastructure development, which could provide high-wage jobs for many of those laid off as a result of the arms cuts. This approach would necessitate a minimal amount of base closing, which Aspin claims is the greatest political obstacle to military budget reduction.

These three modest proposals are only a beginning, but we believe they reflect the principles of a more peaceful and democratic world, and a sounder nation. ◀

IN THESE TIMES

"...with liberty and justice for all"

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InTHESE TIMES

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SALIM MUWAKKIL

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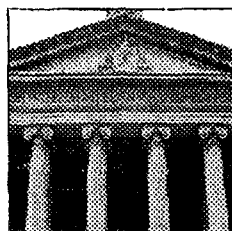


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LETTERS

Reconstructing washerwomen

Perhaps I've misunderstood. Does Charles J. Stivale (Letters, Nov. 30) really mean to suggest that domestic workers ("washerwomen") and other hard-working, low-paid, often poorly educated people should, in order to defend themselves against political manipulation, spend their leisure hours learning words like "elide" and "eschew" and become fluent in the style of prose cited in James Soderholm's article "Foul language and the academic left" (ITT, Oct. 28)? Besides being naive, this suggestion indicates a sort of elitist arrogance that is painful to see coming from the supposed left. Ironically, Stivale unwittingly validates the point he wishes to refute.

Also, does he really mean to say that because Allan Bloom and Dinesh D'Souza advance the same idea as Soderholm, that idea must necessarily be without merit? Ironically again, this type of illogic is a central component of the political manipulation Stivale seems to condemn.

Joseph Demboski
Seattle

Academic game

Unlike Charles Stivale (Letters, Nov. 30), I found James Soderholm's "Foul language and the academic left" (ITT, Oct. 28) wonderful. And as a

High or dry

For all of the bathtub readers of *In These Times*, I thank you for switching from tabloid to magazine format. The magazine format dries out with greater ease and uniformity, is easier to keep one's place in and stays in one piece.

As for mistaking ITT for the similarly formatted *Nation*, no problem. ITT is the one with a sense of humor.

Joseph Murphy
Eastsound, Wash.

Easy

Congratulations on an easy-to-read, appealing format. And thank you especially for using recycled paper. I read your first issue almost entirely at one sitting, something I could never do

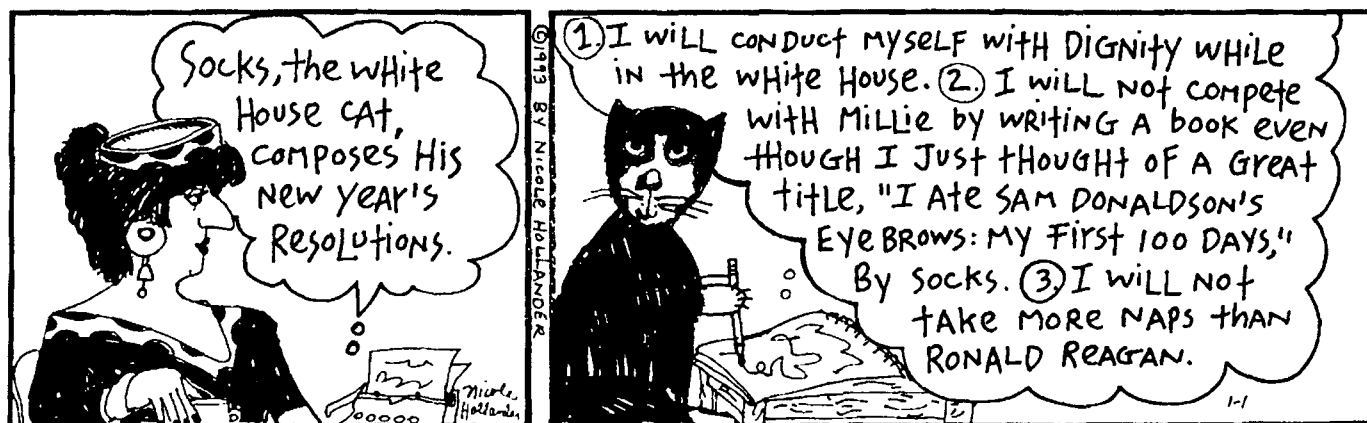
before. But please: don't let brevity replace depth. I could have used more of Salim Muwakkil, the article on China's right swerve, and the "In Person" feature on Bill Wheat, the Caterpillar worker. I know it's impossible to please everyone, but I'd like to add my voice to the responses you'll be getting.

And as long as I'm at it, I want to commend Robert Schaeffer ("Protect people, not states" (ITT, Nov. 30) on his thoughtful reaction to Paul Hocken's proposal for military intervention in the Balkans. It is evident that war doesn't solve a thing. We must begin to use our heads to employ peaceful means of resolving conflict on all levels, from the personal to the global.

Suzanne Antisdel
Detroit

SYLVIA

by Nicole Hollander



former student of Gayatri Spivak, I think I can attest that not only can she not speak to old washerwomen, she often has difficulty speaking to people as well educated as herself.

Soderholm's argument, I believe, echoes that of Edward Said in "Reflections on American 'Left' Literary Criticism." Abstruse language, Marxist or otherwise, is a game academicians play with themselves. Northrop Frye called this "turning the prayer wheel," and while it may be an essential part of promotions and tenure, as argued by Russell Jacoby, it has absolutely nothing to do with changing the world. In fact, it may well be the power elite's way of keeping us out of trouble and out of their hair.

If we are going to be serious about changing the world, we are going to have to recognize that the abstruse language is how we earn a living. To confuse academic Marxist jargon with progressive action is foolish. And if the truths we discover through exploring this abstruse language are going to have any effect, we are going to have to learn how to translate it so that other people can understand.

Jacqueline R. Smetak
Ames, Iowa

What's the goal?

Paul Hockenos' "The case for intervention in the Balkans" (*ITT*, Oct. 28) is identical in argumentation to the offerings of the mainstream press on this subject.

Before talking of intervention, the point is surely to decide what principles such intervention would be defending. What is to be the rule for border disputes in post-communist Eastern Europe? The preservation of existing borders? If so, then the nationalist aspirations of the Albanians living in the Serbian territory of Kosovo should not be encouraged. National self-determination? If so, then the claims of Serbs to territories in Croatia and Bosnia are perfectly justified.

The "international community" is currently invoking these principles

selectively in Yugoslavia, in each case applying the principle more disadvantageous to Serbia.

The Serbs' zeal to compensate in Bosnia for the territory they seem likely to lose in Croatia and Kosovo is represented by Hockenos and the mainstream media as an incomprehensible phenomenon, or else taken as an opportunity to cast the Serbs, together with the Croats, as joint persecutors of the unfortunate Bosnian Muslims, and thus conscript the Muslim world into a political campaign which will help it to forget its own still very recent humiliations at the hands of the same "international community."

It is certainly a sobering experience to see "the Western left" so little concerned with the outrages being perpetrated in Yugoslavia, particularly in light of the Nazi precedents, but Hockenos' article is part of the problem, not part of the solution.

W.E. Hall
Athens, Greece

Trickle-up?

Democrats and Republicans have long differed over trickle-down and trickle-up economics. Trickle-down favors regressive taxes, government deregulation and anti-union measures. Trickle-up favors tax cuts for the working poor and middle class, active government, striker-replacement legislation and the like. As William Jennings Bryan put it in 1896, "There are those who believe that, if you will only legislate to make the well-to-do prosperous, their prosperity will leak through on those below. The Democratic idea, however, has been that if you legislate to make the masses prosperous, their prosperity will find a way up through every class that rests upon them."

At issue is class inequality and how best to run a capitalist economy. Whenever anyone mentions class in America, as Gore Vidal notes, a booming chorus thunders across the land denying that such horror could ever exist. "Clinton has gotten across the point that we are a party of growth

and not redistribution," House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt told the *New York Times* on the day Bill Clinton was elected president.

Denials aside, Clinton cannot escape class. Trickle-down capitalism, also known as supply-side economics, accepts economic inequality as the price of economic growth; trickle-up capitalism tilts toward greater equality on the theory that demand fuels growth. Both accept class inequality as permanent; one looks first to capital, the other to labor.

Which version of capitalism dominates America depends on achieving an economic pie large enough so that those seeking the American dream do not have to pull down those who attain it. When capitalism fails, as it now has under the policies of presidents Reagan and Bush, a new (old) formula is tried.

Four years from now, when Bill Clinton faces the question of whether people are better off than they were four years ago, the answer—and his political future—will depend on whether his version of capitalism produces non-inflationary economic growth, more jobs and a stronger competitive position for U.S. products in world markets.

Will trickle-up work? History suggests yes, but not for long. Politicians have been unable to find a permanent solution to the conflict between equality and inequality that lies at the heart of capitalism. The metronomic quality of American politics and economics is the outstanding lesson of American history.

John F. Manley
Professor of Political Science
Stanford University

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you wished to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

INSHORT



SOUR GRAPES

EPA lets growers play pesticide roulette

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator William Reilly has given the go-ahead for California's grape growers to spray the 1993 crop of table grapes with this mystery chemical.

Hydrogen cyanamide is marketed under the brand name Dormex by a German chemical company, SKW Trostberg Aktiengesellschaft. The chemical works as a growth regulator. Vines sprayed with Dormex bear fruit earlier, allowing the growers to harvest grapes earlier in the season.

How hydrogen cyanamide affects a human's growing season is not known. As the name suggests, however, it is a poison. In 1984, the EPA first denied

The next grape you eat could be contaminated with hydrogen cyanamide, an untested and unregistered pesticide.

In one of the Bush administration's last regulatory giveaways,



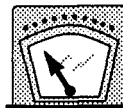
APPALL-O-METER

The In These Times index of life's little indecencies.

By Woody Igou

Oh, those crumbling values

The *American Spectator* ran the following help-wanted ad in their own



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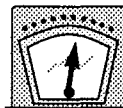
magazine looking for a business manager: "Responsibilities

include managing the mundane commercial affairs of the magazine. An excellent opportunity, especially if you want to have the freedom to open a beer at your desk or smoke cigarettes in the office anytime you please."

Or you can just go back to your dorm room and do it.

No, it's not a new Cadillac

A recent poll taken by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Founda-



6.2

tion revealed that the primary worry of families making less than \$20,000 a

year was how to pay doctor and hospital bills. This concern out-ranked paying rent or mortgage payments and finding a job.

Bring me your tired, your hungry, your fully insured.

The color of money

Florida Workman's Compensation authorities ordered full disability and benefits to a woman claiming she could not work with blacks after

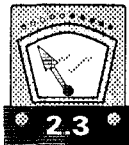
being mugged by a black man. The woman, diagnosed with "post-traumatic stress disorder," testified that the sight of black men



on television "sometimes" upset her, although she does not fear CNN's Bernard Shaw. As long as he stays behind that big desk.

Attitude sickness

On a U.S. Air flight to Fort Lauderdale, a passenger took control of the plane's intercom and was arrested

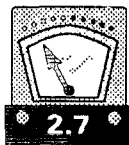


after "making statements, upsetting the passengers." The man told the passengers to "vote for George Bush."

At least we know the man at the intercom wasn't Ronald Reagan.

Did Samson say it hurt?

A new fad has emerged to



continue the confusion of the beleaguered American male—chest waxing. Men are now emulating TV commercial models by shaving or removing their body hair for a "sleeker look."

I am Ken doll; hear me roar.

APPALL-O-METER SCALE

1. Weightless banality
2. Green Acres stupid
3. Malicious cretinism
4. Howard Sternesque
5. Mary Matalin mean
6. Gangrenous venality
7. A touch of evil
8. A cancer in the Zeitgeist
9. Et tu, Pol Pot?
10. Horseperson of the Apocalypse

the grape industry's request to spray the herbicide, citing "insufficient mammalian toxicology data for this chemical to support its use." No tests have been conducted to see if this poisonous chemical can cause cancer, birth defects or immune system disorders.

It is known that use of hydrogen cyanamide increases the profits of those grape growers who use it. Early grapes are the most expensive and those growers who get them to market are guaranteed high profits. In recent years growers in Mexico, where pesticides are poorly regulated, have sprayed hydrogen cyanamide on their crop and beat the California growers to the market—and the bank.

In 1988, 1989 and 1990, the grape industry wrangled an exemption out of the EPA and then sprayed this untested chemical on domestic table grapes. Subsequently, federal regulations were tightened and on November 24 Douglas Campt, the director of the EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs, denied the industry's request to spray this year. The grape industry cried foul and on December 16 Campt rescinded his previous ruling, writing that "my original decision on this issue has been recently revisited by [Reilly]."

If the chemical is applied properly, the EPA claims, primary residues of this "unregistered product" are of no concern. And for those worried about secondary residues, Campt went on to clarify: "Secondary residues in meat, milk, poultry and eggs are not expected, since grapes are not considered a livestock feed item." Since only humans eat grapes, does this mean that only nursing babies and cannibals are at risk?

—Joel Bleifuss

INFORMATION IMPLOSION

U.S. libraries face worst cutbacks since Great Depression

The Clinton administration rhetoric is very persuasive: to maintain America's standard of living, the nation needs investment in human capital and new high-tech networks to link people and information. But the social reality is very

depressing: what many communities most need now is very low-tech access to information—the ability to keep library doors open and buy a few books.

Chicago is all too typical. At the start of the new year, the city's public library system cut the hours at its much-lauded year-old Harold Washington Library by one-third, as a result of library budget cuts by Republican Gov. Jim Edgar. Last year, the book budget plummeted by more than 70 percent. The library also shut down its services for Cook County Jail inmates. Mayor Richard Daley closed the nearly century-old municipal reference library, an essential treasure for grass-roots organizers, historians and city workers, shifting responsibility to the underfunded public library.

From Brooklyn to rural Shasta County, California, the American Library Association reports, libraries are closing or cutting hours and services—the worst cutbacks since the Depression of the '30s. The poor are hardest hit, but even wealthy areas, like Montgomery County, Maryland, are suffering.

At the same time book and serial costs are increasing dramatically. Libraries cannot even maintain their traditional resources let alone add new, expensive services of computer databases, compact discs and videocassettes. Four-fifths of all public library funding comes from local governments, who are hard hit not only by the recession but by the shift of responsibilities from the federal government and the political or legal limitations on their powers to tax.

—David Moberg

PRESS FREEDOM

Protecting journalists in Central America

Byron Barrera knows that being a reporter can be a dangerous business in Central America. The 25-year veteran of Guatemalan print and broadcast journalism is the survivor of a 1990 assassination attempt that killed his wife and left him wounded. The Barreras were attacked on their way to work, when two men on a motorcycle fired six bullets into their car.

Barrera is now living in exile in Costa Rica, where he recently began the Central American Office for the Protection of Journalists and Freedom of Expression (CEPEX). Last month CEPEX expanded to El Salvador and Nicaragua, and by the end of 1993 Barrera hopes to have all of Central America covered.

CEPEX's objective, in coordination with the Canadian Committee to Protect Journalists, is to quickly mobilize the international journalism and human rights communities through a sophisticated computer "action alert network" to petition governments and companies about human rights violations. Organizations such as Amnesty International, the International Red Cross and the International Federation of Journalists are involved in the process which links members through e-mail on a worldwide basis.

The Toronto-based facility, known as IFEX (International Freedom of Expression Exchange), is the world's largest clearinghouse of information on freedom of expression and human rights.

CEPEX is also working with different sectors of Central American society through workshops, symposiums and international investigative reports to create a prevention and education network. "Our work is not just about the protection of the rights and freedom of expression of journalists," Barrera says. "It is about creating basic human rights and freedom of expression for all sectors of Central American society."

In its six months of on-line existence, CEPEX has already helped in the cases of four Central American journalists. "It's not totally sufficient," Barrera says, "but at least it's something."

—Brahm Eiley

NOT WANTED

Small town police chief becomes poster child of racism

The white police chief of Norway, South Carolina, a town of 500 located in the farm belt 45 miles east of Columbia, recently put up a hand-lettered "wanted" poster. Underneath two pictures of a black man was the word "Rabbit." The poster, which offered rewards for his capture—\$100 if alive and \$500 if dead—also read, "Last seened (sic) running like a rabbit."

When confronted about the poster by a member of a local grass-roots organization called Tri-County United, Police Chief Jim Preacher denied having anything to do with it, according to the group's organizer, Kamau Marcharia. "He got kind of confrontational," Marcharia says.

But Preacher later told a newspaper the posters were his and called them "a practical joke."

Unfortunately, this behavior is not an anomaly. Tri-County United has protested several other instances of racist behavior by law enforcement in Orangeburg County, which has a population that is about 62 percent black.

In fact, Preacher has his job in part because the group insisted on the ouster of his predecessor, a police chief who posted signs saying no more than three

MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

Nice try

Back in 1990, Sen. Paul Simon (D-IL) finally got legislation passed to circumvent anti-trust restrictions so that the TV networks could work together on limiting violence on television. And then Simon, a great respecter of the First Amendment but also an appalled parent, sat back and waited for the industry to seize upon the opportunity he had carved out for them.

And waited. And waited.

Now, finally, the TV networks have cobbled together a statement to the effect that excessive violence is a bad idea.

But nobody included Fox, the virtual fourth network. Meanwhile, cable programmers are busy trying to establish that their programming overall is less violent than network programming. And the Hollywood producers who make TV shows are muttering about censorship. So nobody expects much to happen.

The violence issue is one of the oldest of the many unresolved controversies in the mass media age. It's extremely difficult to address with laws or rules that tinker with the content. After all, the First Amendment also applies to TV producers.

The culprits in the rise of the violence-and-vulgarity era on television are the zealous deregulators who took away structural safeguards in the

industry and gutted the notion of public interest. That's why President Clinton's two upcoming appointments for Federal Communications commissioners are of critical importance.

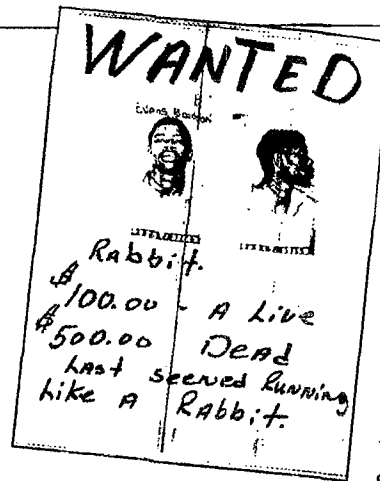
It was inevitable

Here at last—the novelization of the TV commercial! Those who have been wondering about the fate of the lovers shown in a series of ads for Nestle's Gold Blend will be able to find out all by February. That's when *Love over Gold*, a romance novel featuring images from the ads on its cover and interweaving mentions of the coffee with moments of passion, will be released in England.

Unfortunately, since the commercial series hasn't completed its storyline yet in the U. S., American viewers will have to wait a bit to get the news.

Meanwhile, what phone company Bell Atlantic is calling a "sitcommercial" is the latest experiment in the infomercial world that has bloomed since the FCC dropped its prohibition on the form in the early '80s. *The Ringers* is a half-hour situation comedy built around the phone company's hype for such services as call waiting and Caller ID. The phone company claims it will show consumers how seemingly futuristic phone options could be part of their daily lives today. Some reviewers find lines such as "And I have speed calling!" just a little forced.

© 1993 Pat Aufderheide



black people could gather in town at one time, Marcharia says. "He gave \$45-\$100 tickets to black people for walking on a dirt road after 11:30 at night."

Tri-County United, a mostly black group formed in 1990 to tackle these kinds of problems, initially attracted substantial community support. More than 60 people showed up regularly at its meetings at Lovely Hill Baptist Church. But, Marcharia says, the going got tough when local thugs, who had been told the group wanted to run them out of town, came to the church and told the group to cease its activities.

"We kept meeting. Within three or four months, three people who attended the meetings had their houses burned down and two families were evicted from their homes on farms owned by whites." These days, the turnout at Tri-County's meetings has dwindled to eight, Marcharia says.

But the group still has community support. A black woman whose candidacy the group backed was elected to the town council. Tri-County also convinced Norway officials to apply for a \$380,000 grant—which the town got—to rehabilitate 20 houses in the black community.

"People say a lot has been accomplished," Marcharia says, "but there's a lot of misery, too."

—Robin Epstein

CLINTON'S DLC COHORTS

Neocons being relegated to positions without power

Two groups expecting a big payoff from Bill Clinton's presidency are still waiting at the bank. After Clinton's victory, the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), which Clinton chaired in 1990, was claiming personal victory. "What we've

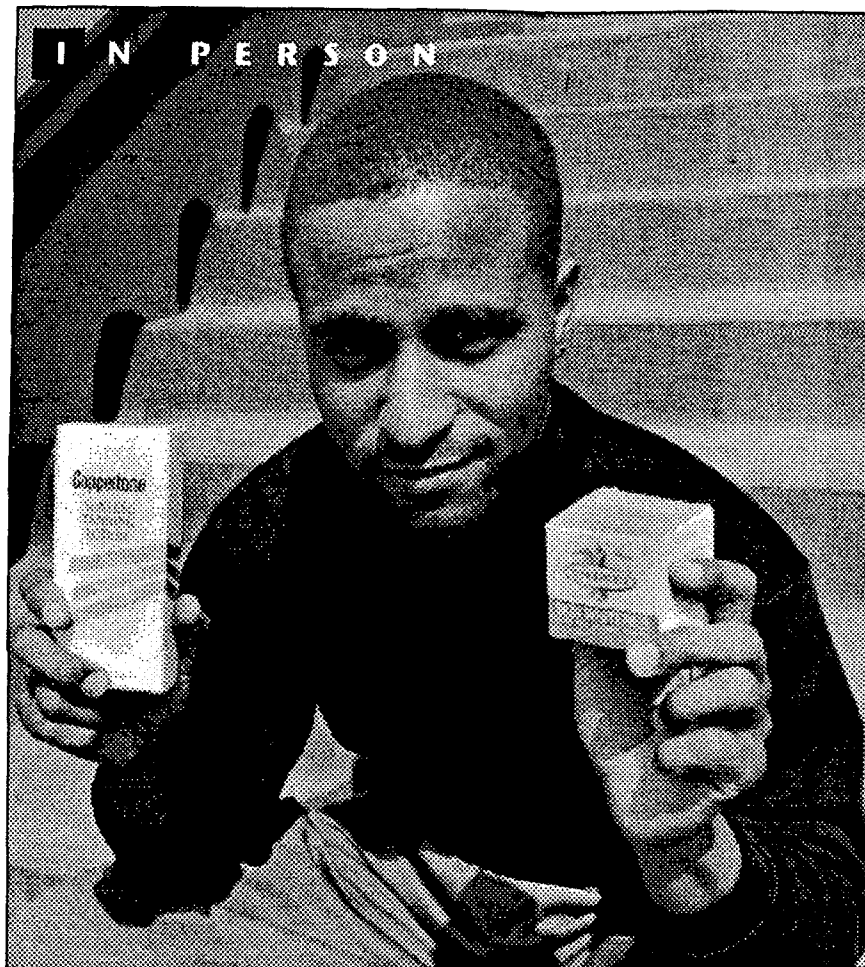
done in the Democratic Party is an intellectual leveraged buyout," said Rob Shapiro, the vice president of the DLC's Progressive Policy Institute. But the DLC staff has yet to land a major appointment.

Shapiro, one of Clinton's economic advisers, did not get one of the two top posts at the Office of Management and Budget. Some of the cabinet appointees are DLC members, but at Health and Human Services, a department where the DLC's ideas on welfare and government spending might have been tried out, Clinton appointed a traditional liberal, Donna Shalala. It looks like the best the DLC will do is Bruce Reed, a former staffer, as the deputy domestic policy adviser under Carol Rasco, a Clinton aide from Arkansas.

Washington neoconservatives, who belatedly endorsed Clinton last summer, have also been shut out of major foreign policy appointments. Moreover, Clinton picked as secretary of state and national security adviser two former Carter administration officials who in 1980 were the targets of neoconservative attacks. On January 8, Clinton's nominee for secretary of state, Warren Christopher, met with prominent neoconservatives to assure them that his foreign policy appointments would be "balanced" to include them.

But it's likely that the neoconservatives will suffer the same fate in the Clinton administration that the religious right did in the Reagan administration—being consigned to ceremonial posts with no power over the administration's policies.

—John B. Judis



Bill Stamets

COLOR ME

*Artist Danny Tisdale
reappropriates
black culture*

African-American performance artist Danny Tisdale lives in a brownstone a half-block off Malcolm X Boulevard in New York City. He gives his address as "Harlem U.S.A., 10026."

One day last year Tisdale set up a table on the sidewalk on the corner of 125th St. and Lenox Avenue and started selling skin-lightening products. Identifying himself as "Mr. Tracey E. Goodman," president of "Transitions, Inc.," Tisdale hawked, "We turn minorities into majorities." It was a trial run for a performance piece.

Tisdale was not ready for the response he got on that corner in the heart of Harlem. While skin-bleaching creams might seem an historical oddity, he was astounded by how many blacks told him they were unaware that the likes of Dr. Fred Palmer's Skin Whitener are on the shelves today. "People didn't even know that these products were being sold in their own community," says Tisdale.

As part of his performance, Tisdale handed out mock advertisements with the come-on: "Are you tired of being called Asian, black, Jewish, Indian, Italian, or so on? Now with Transitions, Inc., you can be called exotic!" In a testimonial, one satisfied, albeit fictive, customer states: "... because of Transitions, Inc., I now know how the other half lives."

Tisdale, a 33-year-old graphic designer, was born in Compton, Calif. His father worked in a refinery, but moved the family to Simi Valley after the

ETC.

By Glenora Croucher

Glory days

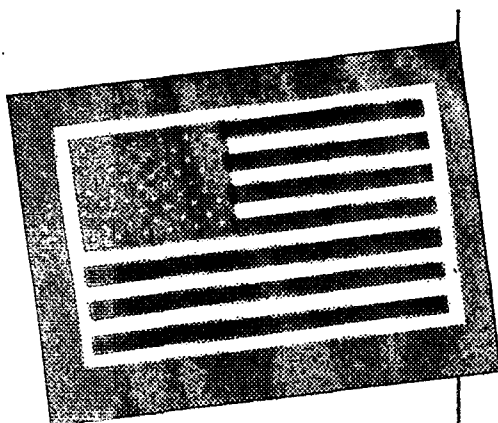
It seems that Alex Stella isn't the only one out there who thinks the Pledge of Allegiance needs an update. Since publishing a piece on Stella's revised pledge (see *In These Times*, Nov. 30, 1992), I've received letters from two other people who actually took the time to come up with a substitute for the familiar salute written by Francis Bellamy a century ago.

So far, everyone I've heard from believes the focus on Old Glory is inappropriate. Davis Pace, like Stella, believes Americans should pledge their allegiance to the Constitution. His oath very nearly resembles the current pledge to the flag—with a couple of key substitutions. It goes:

I pledge allegiance
to the Constitution
of the United States
of America
and to the freedom
for which it stands
one person
respecting others
creating liberty
and justice for all.

Pace, of Glendora, Calif., says he's been distributing copies of his proposed pledge throughout Southern California, but has yet to find a schoolteacher or principal willing to lead students with it.

Our other pledge writer, Bill Sander of Pacific Grove, Calif., has been sending copies of his proposed pledge to such groups as the United Nations Associa-



don, Greenpeace and the International Green Party as well as to individuals including Ted Turner (and Jane Fonda-Turner) and Ann Landers.

Sander considers his oath a "world pledge" and calls it the "Recognition of Unity." It goes like this:

I recognize a vital unity
linking me
with all humanity
and humanity
with all life
acknowledging that
where none prevails
over another
each may prosper
and all may continue.

And it wouldn't be fair
unless we reprinted the
pledge that started it all:
Stella's slightly awkward
but well-intentioned pledge
to the Constitution.

Before the flag
of the United States
of America
I freely pledge
allegiance to
that nation's
Constitution
and to the republic
founded thereon
one democracy,
under God
indivisible, with liberty
and justice for all.

Watts riots when he was promoted to a management job. Tisdale went from one school where there were no whites to another where all but a handful of his classmates were white. Around the dinner table he was schooled by two older brothers, one "a hardcore Black Panther," the other "a hardcore right-wing Green Beret."

Tisdale, in his "Goodman" persona, plugs Transitions, Inc., his full-service assimilation enterprise, by noting a demographic anomaly. "From the 1980 census to the 1990 census, 10 million black people disappeared," he says, pointing to an authoritative graph. Tisdale supposes those people opted to reclassify themselves, due to their light complexions. Salesman Goodman, however, credits Transitions, Inc., for making America whiter.

Tisdale came to New York to work at *Interview* magazine. As advertising production manager, he enjoyed a window into artist Andy Warhol's celebrity laboratory. "I just wanted to see how Andy hustled all those people," he says. "I love magazines."

He watched the staff retouch and lighten photos of Diana Ross and Jean-Paul Basquiat. In fashioning his own art projects, Tisdale adopts the slick strategy he picked up from Warhol's wizardry. "I try to make the presentation kind of seductive so I can sucker punch my audience and bring them in," he explains. "Then once I get them in, I throw substance right in their face."

Tisdale wants to subvert the standard marketing mentality. "If we have long hair, they want us to have short hair. If we have short hair they want us to have long hair. If we're dark-skinned, they want us to be light-skinned. To advertisers, we look in the mirror and there has to be something wrong with us, otherwise they can't make money off of us."

Tisdale is a conceptual artist whose medium is the museum. His improvised exhibits critique and correct curatorial omissions. In "The Black Museum," Tisdale assumed the persona of a curator—instead of a peddler—of racial transitions. With Afro combs, platform shoes and black leather jackets, he displays how the emerging black consumerism of the '70s reflected revolutionary themes of the '60s.

Black Power blended into a new mainstream, rather than giving rise to a new militancy. Anger was recast into advertising motifs. Fascinated by the spinoffs from the Black Power movement, Tisdale surveyed the black consumer market. "I see the '90s as the '60s all over again—just with a different face on it," he says.

Tisdale's latest installation, "Birth of a Nation," was commissioned by the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis as part of "Malcolm X: Man, Ideal, Icon." Open through April 4, the exhibition is billed as "a three-dimensional environment for learning about this historical figure."

Tisdale created Malcolm X wallpaper to decorate a room in the Minnesota museum where he placed three cases of artifacts alluding to three stages in Malcolm X's life. Hair straightener identifies his years as "Detroit Red." A machine gun signifies his "by-any-means-necessary" rhetoric as "Malcolm X." To represent Malcolm X's revelations in Mecca, when he changed his name to "Malik," Tisdale displays a plate, fork and spoon, which refer to Malcolm's eating and praying with white Muslims.

By installing his museum-style art in an actual museum which is commemorating Malcolm X, Tisdale sacrifices his irony. Maybe his critique has made its mark. When a white cultural establishment takes its best shot at doing the right thing with the "X"-thing, Tisdale's exhibit may look like the real thing.

—Bill Stamets

T H E F I R S T S T O N E

WORST EIGHTBALLS

By Joel Bleifuss

Most Americans interpret the demise of the Eastern bloc as a victory for the invisible hand of the free market: capitalist democracy triumphed over state socialism. But this free-market rhetoric obscures the fact that in the aftermath of the Cold War a major threat to the world today comes from unrestrained multinational corporations. Consequently, progressive democrats need to put on their thinking caps and come up with some new strategies.

The political energy that was expended against the Reagan and Bush administrations now should be harnessed to both challenge and regulate multinationals. One place to start is the environmental record of multinational corporations such as GM, Du Pont, GE, USX, MAXXAM, Rockwell, Georgia-Pacific and Cargill.

Last month, the Council on Economic Priorities (CEP) cited these eight companies as having the worst environmental record in their respective industries. CEP is the New York-based consumer organization popularly known for publishing *Shopping for a Better World*.

Not all corporations are venal, CEP's John Weiss points out. "For the last six years we [at the Council for Economic Priorities] have given the America's Corporate Conscience awards. There are companies that do great things."

Others, such as Cargill, do not. The agricultural conglomerate employs 63,000 people from its base in the Minneapolis suburb of Minnetonka. If the company, which is owned by the MacMillan and Cargill families, were not privately held, it would rank seventh in the Fortune 500.

But because it is a family business, Cargill can operate in secret. Nonetheless, CEP investigators were able to dredge up the following information about the company's operations.

Between 1987 and 1992, Cargill was cited by the federal government as having the second highest number of "willful violations" of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations in the food industry. (Campbell

Soup was number one.) OSHA charged that Cargill "knowingly and willfully" jeopardized the health of many employees at a poultry processing plant in Buena Vista, Ga. More than 300 of 500 workers at the plant suffered from "cumulative trauma disorder," an injury similar to carpal tunnel syndrome that can be caused by repetitive butchering motions.

For OSHA violations such as these, Cargill was initially fined \$1,456,000. But after negotiating with government regulators, the company actually paid only \$65,000 in fines—which is low even by OSHA's lax standards.

Cargill also has the worst air pollution record in the food industry. In Chicago Heights, a pitifully poor Chicago suburb, Cargill produces paint resin. In 1989,

that plant spewed 500 pounds of toluene and poured 6,000 pounds of xylene into the air. Both chemicals are chronically toxic and proven teratogens, substances that cause genetic birth defects.

But for Cargill, not all mutations are undesirable. The company's biotechnology labs are working to genetically engineer a corn plant that will tolerate herbicides. While a breakthrough would be a boon for Cargill's seed business, critics charge that such research, if successful, would lead to increased herbicide use.

That would be good for herbicide producer Du Pont, which joins Cargill on the list of environmentally irresponsible companies. Like Cargill, Du Pont's biotech labs are developing crops that are tolerant to herbicides. Further, each year Du Pont produces and markets 25 percent of the world's ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons.

Du Pont is also an active participant in the Chlorine Institute, a chemical trade group that protects the chlorine industry from environmental regulation. One of Du Pont's colleagues at the Chlorine Institute is Georgia-Pacific, another company cited by CEP for its poor environmental record.

Georgia-Pacific is contaminating the backwaters of Arkansas, Florida and Mississippi with dioxin-laden waste from its chlorine bleaching of paper pulp. Currently, 8,209 plaintiffs who live along Mississippi's Leaf River have filed 159 different lawsuits against Georgia-Pacific claiming harm from the company's dioxin pollution. The company has been fined \$4.2 million to date.

As members of the Chlorine Institute, Du Pont and Georgia-Pacific helped host a November 1990 conference on dioxin. Subsequently, the Chlorine Institute issued press releases heralding the alleged "consensus" by experts on dioxin's relative safety. But scientists who attended the conference strongly disagreed with this interpretation, and the Chlorine Institute ultimately disavowed the work of its public relations firm.

The truth apparently didn't stop Georgia-Pacific CEO T.

Marshall Hahn from picking up the ball. The *Wall Street Journal* reported in February 1992 that Hahn and three other paper company executives met with EPA Administrator William Reilly in January 1991 and asked the EPA to relax its dioxin standards. In April 1991 Reilly acquiesced, and the nation's dioxin standards are now under review. As Hahn explained in a letter to Reilly, there is "a consensus in the international health community [at the above-mentioned conference] that the risks of dioxin have been seriously overestimated and that a safe non-zero dose of dioxin can be established."

Evidence indicates that just the opposite is true. Linda Birnbaum, an EPA toxicologist who attended the conference, subsequently stated, "At that time [of the conference] we were focusing on cancer. But since then we've seen that the most sensitive [effect of dioxin] isn't cancer. So far, studies in mice suggest that dioxin's immunotoxic punch occurs in extremely low doses and may well be more important than cancer in determining dioxin's primary health risk."

Besides laying waste to the U.S. environment, Georgia-Pacific is doing a job on the Third World. The company is the number-one importer of tropical timber taken from the rainforests of Brazil, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. From April 1988 to September 1989, the company imported 261 million pounds of tropical rainforest wood.

Georgia-Pacific and MAXXAM, a conglomerate that is cutting down California's redwoods at a record rate, are also partners in environmental crime. Space is limited and there is not room here to connect the corporate dots and examine General Motors, USX, GE/NBC, or Rockwell, but their environmental misdeeds are many.

The actions of these multinationals raise this question: Should they, and other similarly irresponsible corporate citizens, be allowed unregulated access to the world's ecosystems under the guise of free trade?

If within the next year the environmental wasters cited by CEP clean up their act, they will be removed from the list. To prod them in that direction, the clearinghouse has organized a 20-member coalition effort known as the Campaign for Cleaner Corporations, which goes by the abbreviation C3. Funded by Alida Rockefeller, C3's stated goal is to publicly highlight the poor environmental performance of the targeted corporations and thereby pressure them to adopt "more responsible corporate environmental practices."

Twenty organizations have so far pledged to support the C3 campaign, including, among others, Citizen Action

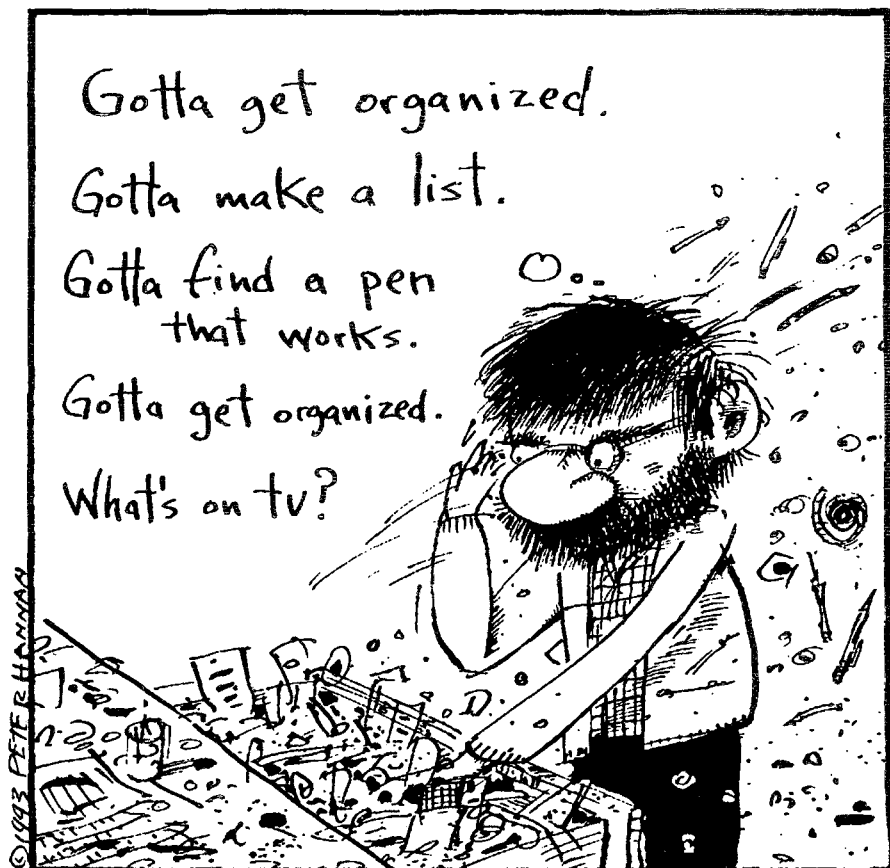
of Columbus, Ohio; the Citizen's Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste of Falls Church, Va.; Earth Island Institute of San Francisco; the Government Accountability Project of Washington; Greenpeace of New York; the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy of Minneapolis; the National Toxics Campaign Fund of Boston; the Rainforest Action Network of San Francisco; the Sierra Club of Washington; the Student Environmental Action Coalition of Chapel Hill, N.C.; and Worldwatch Institute of Washington. A C3 campaign kit, which includes executive summaries of CEP reports on the eight firms and recommended reforms, is available for \$10 from CEP, 30 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, 1-800-729-4CEP.

Pressure can take many forms. A little coercion could be applied through divestment campaigns; the passage of legislation to make corporations liable for their environmental pollution; closing the revolving door between government and industry; and organized boycotts by consumers and government bodies.

One boycott is already in the works. The Rainforest Action Network has targeted Georgia-Pacific for its role in destroying tropical ecosystems. The group is asking consumers not to buy the following brands of paper products: Angel Soft or Cormatic toilet paper, Sparkle or Delta paper towels, and Coronet or Hudson napkins. ◀

THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

by Peter Hannan



BLACK AMERICA

King takes a fall

A

Many black college students are denouncing Martin Luther King's vision as ineffective, or worse, as complicit with white supremacy.

By Salim Muwakkil

Although my life shares some uncanny features with that of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.—we both were born in January and both of us were shot by white men in 1968 at motels in the southeast—I never shared his dream that the civil rights movement would lead to the promised land he envisioned. His faith in the power of moral suasion to produce racial equality made little sense to those of us steeped in the race-man rhetoric of the black nationalists who hung out in the cities during the early '60s.

King's civil rights crowd also hit the wrong stylistic note. Bred in the concrete playgrounds of the urban Northeast, my cohorts and I had little in common with the overall-clad, hymn-singing protestors and their Baptist preacher leader who promised us that we would overcome someday through non-violent tactics. We were the urbane children of

Malcolm X and we wanted to overcome yesterday. Most of us dismissed King's movement as hopelessly naive and, perhaps more damning, "country." His assassination seemingly confirmed my opinion about indelible racism, and the person who shot me five months later solidified it.

I've since developed a much deeper appreciation for King's "country" wisdom, and so it is perhaps poetic justice that I now find myself having to explain King's significance to another generation of Malcolm X's children—particularly college students. Not surprisingly, African-American youth not in college are even more alienated from the King mythology.

Among college students with presumably middle-class aspirations, however, one expects an increased identification with King's ways and means. Middle-class blacks gained disproportionately from the King-inspired civil rights revolution. But in these days of Malcolm-mania and resurgent black

nationalism, many African-American collegians are rejecting King's dream that "we shall overcome," for the harder-edged message of "no justice, no peace."

In the eight years since the nation began celebrating King's January 15 birthday as a national holiday on the closest Monday, college campuses traditionally have observed the day with special programs celebrating and analyzing the slain civil rights leader's ideas. But this year, according to black faculty at several schools, many of those programs could have been canceled for lack of interest. I became aware of this new anti-King attitude while helping to plan a special January 18 celebration for a Chicago-area college. A group of African-American students asked me to delete King's name from the program schedule.

My experience is hardly unique. On some campuses—particularly in the Northeast and Midwest—black student groups even urged their schools to use the day set aside to celebrate King to focus instead on his shortcomings. Throughout the country, African-American college students have become enamored with black nationalism, and contrary arguments, like King's, that stress the need for interracial coalitions often are ridiculed and denounced as ineffective, or worse, as complicit with white supremacy.

As one who once agreed with many of their nationalist positions, I understand the logic leading African-American youths to those conclusions. And despite my distaste for the racial reductionism that too often passes for political analysis on college campuses these days, it doesn't surprise me.

African-Americans historically have turned inward during times when racial antagonisms increase in general society. And as we emerge from the 12-year fog of the Bush-Reagan years with black Americans facing crises in virtually every social sphere, conditions are absolutely ripe for a

black nationalist revival. When I attempt to explain King's faith-soaked optimism to students shaped by the dismal reality of the U.S.A. today, my words sound hollow, much like the words of those advocates of non-violence who once tried to sell me on King's conciliatory message.

The streets of urban black America are much more deadly and considerably less prosperous than they were in the days when I came of age. Many of today's black collegians barely escaped those streets. For me, integration meant access to what was previously denied. For them it means a brain drain from a community desperately drained of virtually everything else. And they're right—desegregation did trigger a black middle-class exodus from many inner-city neighborhoods. When black collegians deride their successful brethren as “sell-outs”—a popular word these days—they most likely are referring to people who found success following King's dream.

They also are referring to me. I can regale these students with tales of my respective infatuations with the Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam—two organizations that condemned King's non-violent integrationism with equal measure—but there's no denying that I benefited directly from the agenda King championed. My journalism career, for example, was made possible through an affirmative action program instigated by King's activism.

By making these connections, I attempt to provide a historical context and demonstrate that my late-blooming appreciation for King is not



merely theoretical. And it should be clear that the Nobel laureate successfully narrowed the gap between this country's egalitarian ideals and its racist reality by skillfully using tactics of moral suasion and non-violent protest.

But from my students' perspective, that gap is wider than ever—and growing daily. And it's statistical data, not paranoia, that's provoking their gloomy assessment and causing them to fear for black America's future. The numbers don't look good and they're not improving. Even the most moderate black spokesfolks are trumpeting concern about the "endangered" black male.

What's more, the current global disaffection with socialist ideology—which provides a compelling critique of Western capitalism and racism—has left a void for black youth seeking alternative visions. Just as ethno-religious divisions are fracturing nation-states internationally, the absence of an ideology that transcends the primitive bonds of blood and myth also has triggered a rush toward identity politics for this country's aggrieved minorities.

The popularity of Afrocentric theory among black collegians is one response to this ideological famine. While

Among black students on college campuses, no black person is more popular than Louis Farrakhan.

the kind of intellectual rigor it sorely lacked.

Critics who dismiss these Afrocentric yearnings as fadishly irrelevant or even—as one *New Republic* writer assessed—racist and malevolent, may themselves be doing a disservice to King's dream of racial harmony. This new vogue is simply the latest manifestation of African-Americans' ongoing search to discover what was lost between the African homeland and the American plantation. The search for the lost cultural connection to Africa has fueled our historical attraction to nationalism and is a legitimate, perhaps even necessary, quest. Afrocentrist theorists contend, and I agree, that the epidemic of violent crime currently rocking so many black communities and exacerbating racial tensions is rooted in that loss.

The black collegians of the '90s are renewing the search for that lost connection with a new urgency. Like most of

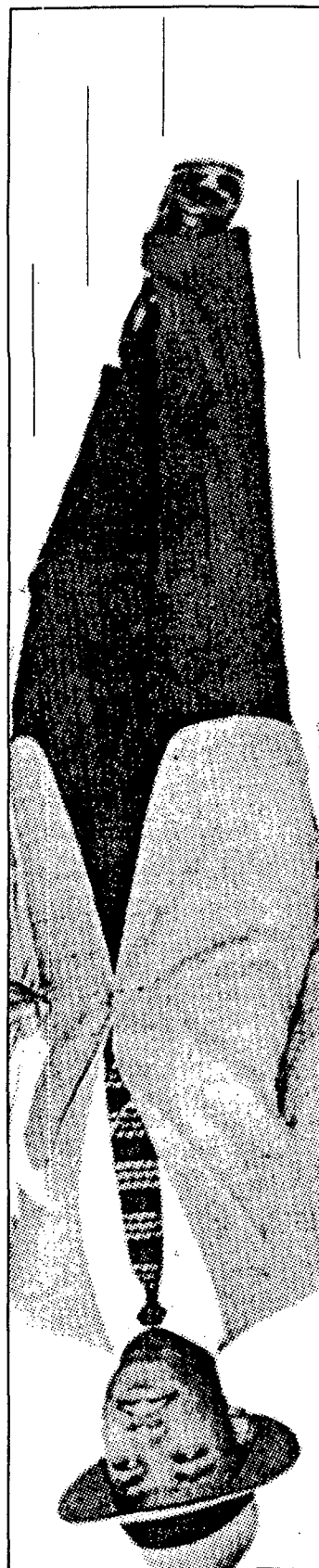
us, they can see the accelerated decay of too many African-American communities. Unlike most of us, they are seeking urgent action. The Afrocentric-flavored nationalism that

many of these youth have embraced gives them a sense of urgency and provides prospects for change. But it also makes them vulnerable to a blacker-than-thou demagoguery that serves to anaesthetize their anguish with scapegoats and racial reductionism.

Enter Minister Louis Farrakhan and his Nation of Islam—I say *his* because there are at least four other groups calling themselves the true Nation of Islam. Among black students on college campuses no black person is more popular than Farrakhan. He infuses his message of self-discipline and self-help with a good dose of genetic determinism and wins the cheers of thousands. Whites are inherently evil, he says, and that's the true reason for our woes.

Instead of aggressively challenging racial reductionists like Farrakhan and others on the fringes of the Afrocentric movement, many black academics have opted to denounce indiscriminately the entire movement. When Henry Louis Gates Jr. warned of "Black Demagogues and Pseudo-Scholars" in a celebrated July 20, 1992 op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, he illuminated the danger of what he calls top-down anti-Semitism (see *In These Times* Sept. 2, 1992), but he unnecessarily besmirched the entire Afrocentric project. This is throwing the baby out with the bathwater.

This antipathy to Afrocentricity and related multi-



cultural expressions is widespread and spreading. And much of this new opposition comes from the left. This, too, is understandable. Watching the former Socialist bloc crumble into barbarous factions, unleashing brutalities we thought humanity had outgrown, it's hard to ignore one particular conclusion of identity politics. It's not so farfetched to envision such a future for this country. Last April 29, for example, it was dangerous being white in south-central Los Angeles.

But being black in America is dangerous every day. The murder rate for black males is six times higher than it is for white males. And it is that insidious danger that black nationalists have been confronting since blacks appeared on the Western stage. Black self-hatred is the genesis of that danger and it, more than anything else, is fueling the rate of violent crime within the African-American community. The Eurocentric biases of U.S. culture have traditionally dehumanized and devalued African-Americans. And since blacks are socialized in this culture, black self-hatred is the status quo. Black nationalists' primary mission is to eradicate this cultural self-hatred.

King's current disfavor won't be permanent. The civil rights leader focused on gaining access to the benefits of a racially exclusive society while de-emphasizing our identity quest. Soon the pendulum will swing back and King will rise in accord.

Perhaps then I'll have to explain Malcolm's significance. ◀

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HEALTH CARE

Socialized medicine is good business

A single-payer system would save both lives and money.

By Steffie
Woolhandler and
David U.
Himmelstein

In a report issued early this month, the Commerce Department said that spending on health care last year reached a record 14 percent of the nation's total economic output, and predicted that by next year health care costs for the nation will total more than \$1 trillion.

In simple human terms, uncontrolled increases in health care costs have caused millions of Americans to forgo needed health care or to be bankrupted as a result of health emergencies. For federal and state budgets, the increases mean less money available for investment in education, infrastructure and other needs. For business, especially small business, the burden of health insurance has become increasingly difficult to bear.

At his December eco-

nomie town hall meeting in Little Rock, President Clinton said that bringing down health care costs was a prerequisite to other essential economic reforms. But in his campaign, Clinton also said that he wanted to rely on market forces as much as possible, and he praised managed competition among insurers as a strategy to control costs. Managed competition, however, would leave existing industry structures intact and could attain savings only by limiting the volume of clinical services or the wage cost of health workers. Managed competition is unlikely to provide adequate health care coverage for those now uninsured or underinsured, or to effectively control costs.

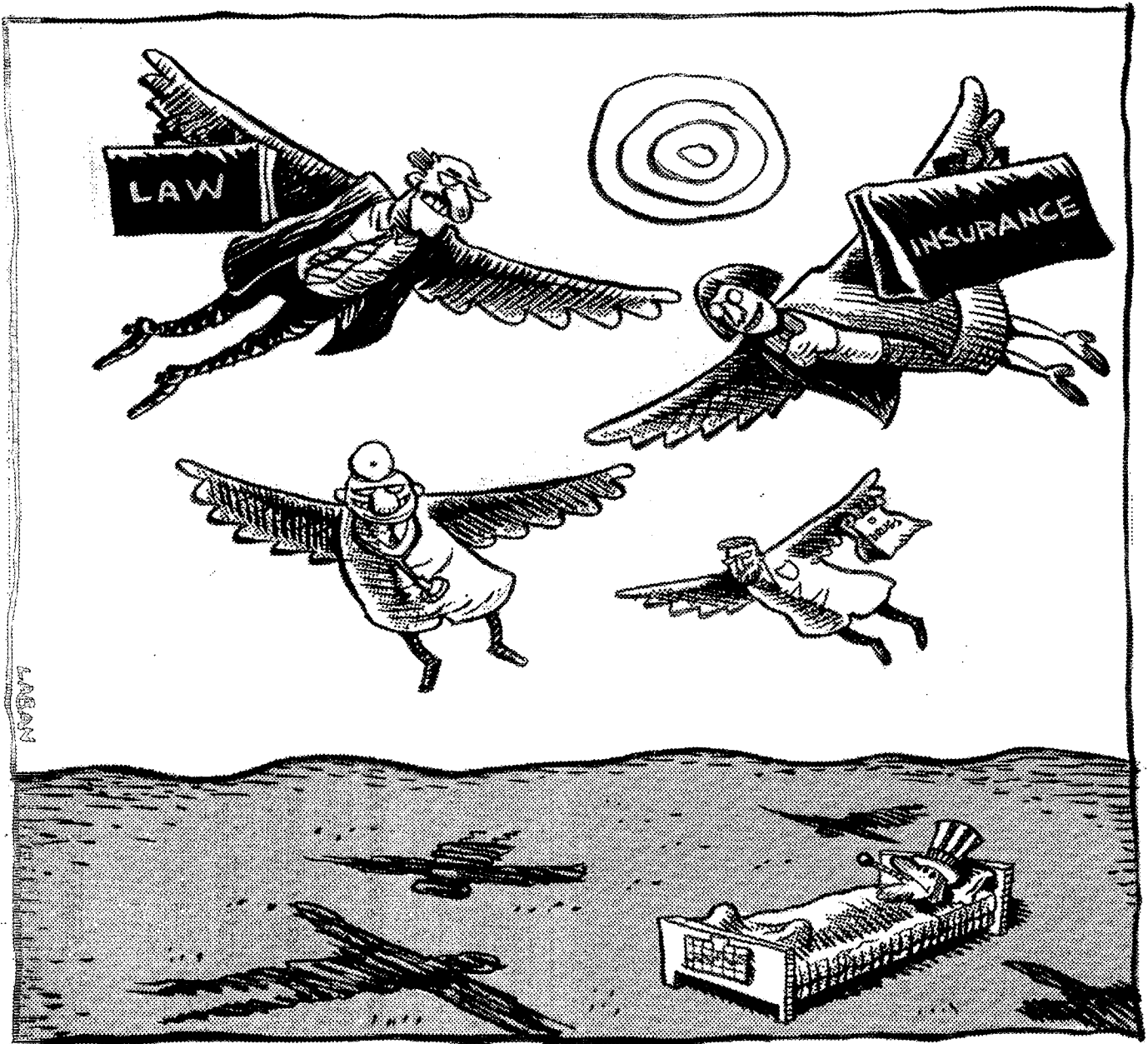
As long as health care remains a commodity, in which access to care is based on ability to pay, the inefficiencies and administrative waste of the current system will prevent substantial improvement in coverage or reduction in costs. Aside from being inherently unjust, differential access to health care based on ability to pay requires the herculean administrative task of attributing each charge and payment to an individual patient. This compels health institutions to waste huge

amounts of money on marketing and bureaucratic sieves that separate lucrative from unprofitable patients, services and procedures.

The abolition of billing for service would with a single stroke eliminate the need for the entire insurance industry and much of doctors' office and hospitals' administrative expenses. Distribution of funds based on health care needs, rather than market forces, would save the money now spent on marketing. Eliminating corporate profit from the sale of health care would free up money for expanded health services and research. And abandoning litigation in favor of no-fault compensation for medical errors could direct remuneration to victims rather than attorneys and insurance companies.

In contrast to these reforms, most mainstream health policy debate has concentrated on the optimal means of rationing care. Cost-effectiveness analysis is usually advocated as the way to minimize the ill effects of such rationing, but these analysts base their calculations on current costs, which include the sums wasted on bureaucracy, marketing, profits, high physicians' incomes and defensive medicine.

Based on the assumption that the health care system will remain essentially unchanged, the cost-effectiveness approach ignores the potential for saving through structural reform. Worse, the solution of rationing based on such analysis entails the collection of detailed financial data, additional administrative controls and further bureaucratic hypertrophy. In other words, additional administrative costs.



The extent of waste in our current health care system is much greater than most people realize. Conservatively, we estimate that 30 percent of health spending (\$226 billion in 1991) is wasted on administration, profits, high physician incomes, marketing and defensive medicine, none of which goes to improve health care.

Everyone now acknowledges that health care costs are higher in the United States than in other industrialized nations. One of every seven dollars spent in the United States—14 percent of gross national product—goes to the health care industry. This compares to only 6 percent of gross national product for health care in Britain and 8 percent in Canada. And both those countries provide free care to all. Yet the advocates of managed competition claim that either a Canadian-style or a British-style universal health

care system would be too expensive. Indeed, with the help of the media, they have created a popular perception that it would cost too much to provide uniform, free service to all Americans on the basis of need alone.

In fact, nationalization of the health care system would save both lives and money. A single-payer plan that eliminated the unnecessary costs outlined below would not only be less expensive than our present system, but would also save enough money to provide quality care for everyone. Left critics of U.S. health care, however, have focused on inequalities, arguing that universal free access would improve health care. Few have challenged the official ideology that the “free market” in health care engenders efficiency.

As a result, advocates of socialized medicine have not

experienced the issue of skyrocketing costs as an opportunity, but as an obstacle. Yet the true obstacles to a national health service are not economic, but political and ideological. If the public understood the extent of waste in our current "free market" health care system, its days would be numbered.

So let's look at the elements in the existing system that raise the cost of care without providing medical services.

First, administrative costs. Between 1970 and 1991, the number of health care administrators in the United States increased by 697 percent, while the total number of health care personnel increased by only 129 percent. Rapidly rising costs of health insurance overhead, hospital and nursing home administration and doctors' office overhead attest to the bureaucratization of medical care. In 1991 these costs totaled \$159.1 billion, or 21 percent of all health care spending.

The 1,500 private U.S. health insurers took in \$241.5 billion in premiums in 1991 and paid out \$209.2 billion in benefits. The \$32.3 billion in overhead paid for processing bills, marketing, building and furnishing insurance company offices, and profits for commercial insurers. In addition, the administrative costs of Medicare and other government programs totaled \$10.3 billion.

Hospital administrative costs are more difficult to quantify because many personnel classified as clinical for accounting purposes do some administrative work. Internists in one academic department of medicine, for example, spend 18 percent of their time on administration, and social workers at many hospitals devote considerable effort to insurance reimbursement problems. But even excluding the administrative work of clinical personnel, vast amounts of money and human talent are expended on billing, marketing, cost accounting and institutional planning. In California, administration and accounting constitute 20.6 percent of hospital costs. Similar figures have been reported for hospitals in Florida and Texas. We estimate that, nationwide, hospital administration and accounting cost \$57.6 billion in 1991.

In addition, nursing home administration accounted for 15.8 percent of total costs in California's long-term care facilities, and a similar proportion of Texas' nursing home costs. Using the California percentage projected onto the \$59.1 billion spent nationally for nursing home care, we estimate administrative costs of \$9.3 billion.

Finally, physicians incurred professional expenses of \$66.8 billion in 1991, 45 percent of their gross income. Much of this is for administration. Secretarial and clerical staff make up 47 percent of non-physician personnel employed in doctors' offices. Much of their time is spent on tasks like patient and third-party billing.

These administrative costs have increased much more rapidly than overall health spending in recent years—16.4 percent compared to 10.3 percent for the most recent year for which we have figures. Costs of hospital administration have also risen much more rapidly than other hospital costs. At one major Northeastern teaching hospital, the propor-

tion of total expenditures devoted to administration has doubled over the past 55 years. And so it goes across the board.

In contrast to all this, Canada's universal health insurance system, administered by the provincial governments, gives each hospital a single annual lump sum to cover operating expenses and pays doctors on a fee-for-service basis. Capital spending is tightly controlled, and binding fees are negotiated between the government and physicians. A Canadian hospital has virtually no billing department and little of the detailed internal accounting structure needed to attribute costs and charges to individual patients and physicians. Physician billing is simplified by the unified system, with overhead averaging only 0.9 percent of premium income, one-fourteenth of the U.S. private insurers' overhead.

In Canada, administration accounts for only 9 percent of hospital spending. Insurance overhead and hospital administration together consume 6 percent of total Canadian health resources.

In Britain, the National Health Service owns most hospitals, pays physicians on a salaried or capitation basis and has no insurance overhead. Administrative costs there amount to 5.7 percent of hospital expenses and central administration consumes 2.6 percent of total spending. Together these categories account for 6 percent of health spending, though recent market-oriented reforms may drive up these figures.

Comparing the Canadian and British systems to our own, we calculated the potential administrative savings in the U.S. would be \$115.2 billion—15.2 percent of current health spending—using the Canadian system, and even more using the British system.

In addition to these potential administrative savings, separating corporate profit from health care could save substantial sums. Profits of health-related industries have soared in the past three decades. After-tax profits averaging 7.6 percent between 1978 and 1983 placed health care third among the 42 U.S. industry groups.

Profits represent health spending in excess of the costs of care, and there is no evidence to suggest that higher profits mean better care. Indeed, the scant empirical evidence comparing proprietary and not-for-profit hospitals and nursing homes supports the opposite conclusion.

Similarly, claims of greater efficiency in the for-profit health sector are not supported by current data. Private insurance plans have much higher overhead than do government insurance programs. For-profit hospitals economize on clinical personnel and services but have higher total per diem costs because of greater administrative and ancillary services.

The pursuit of profit also diminishes the cost effectiveness of the health care system as a whole by basing resource allocation primarily on financial considerations. The profit-maximizing behavior of medical enterprises often conflicts with the cost-minimizing interests of society. Long-term

cost-effective services that offer scant financial reward—immunization programs, prenatal care for the poor, non-pharmacologic treatment of borderline hypertension—remain underdeveloped. But vast resources are devoted to lucrative but unproven services such as executive stress tests, weight-loss clinics and coronary artery surgery.

Pharmacological firms also squander enormous sums promoting “me-too” formulations of popular drugs, while eschewing vaccines or “orphan” drugs for uncommon illnesses. Similarly, the option of home-based renal dialysis is unavailable in many areas, forcing all dialysis patients into institute-based treatment, which is twice as expensive (and more profitable).

Adopting the British model of nationalization or a Canadian-style tightly controlled public insurance system in the United States would largely eliminate the profits of health care providers (\$2.8 billion in 1983) and financial institutions (\$2.1 billion in 1983). Broader reform could curtail profits in drugs (\$5.6 billion), medical equipment (\$2.8 billion) and hospital construction (\$200 million).

Private health insurance and medicine for-profit cost Americans \$138 billion in 1991.

Thus potential savings from eliminating health care profits range from \$4.9 billion to \$13.5 billion, depending on whether nationalization were limited to health providers or were extended to suppliers and construction as well.

Physicians' incomes make up another area of potential savings. In 1941, doctors in the U.S. earned 3.5 times as much as average workers.

This ratio had climbed to 6.0 in 1990, when doctors' incomes averaged \$164,300. We are unaware of any improvement in the quality of care as a result of this increase, and 70 percent of Americans now believe that doctors are overpaid. Further, current reimbursement mechanisms skew the distribution of physician services toward financial rather than health needs and have increased disparities between primary care providers and specialists.

The impact of a national health program on physician incomes would depend on the fee or salary scale. In 1982, the average Canadian doctor earned \$97,000 (Canadian dollars), 4.8 times the average wage, and disparities among specialists were considerably smaller than in the United States. Inter-speciality inequalities are also smaller in Britain, where in 1980 the average physician earned 2.3 times the average male worker's wage. If U.S. doctors' incomes were reduced to the level found in Canada or England, savings of \$20.4 or \$44.9 billion would be achieved.

Drug marketing is yet another source of potential savings—to the tune of at least \$4 billion now spent on adver-

tising and “detailing.” Some argue that such marketing is not only expensive, but that it also adversely affects physicians' prescribing habits. Similar arguments apply to advertising for medical equipment and supplies.

Advertising by hospitals, HMOs and other health providers has increased dramatically in recent years. Hospital industry sources estimate that advertising and marketing account for 1 percent of total not-for-profit spending and between 3 and 5 percent of for-profit spending. Based on these figures, provider marketing cost at least \$3.4 billion in 1991. Total marketing and advertising costs exceeded \$7.4 billion in 1991. If reimbursement under a national health program excluded compensation for such activity, at least that much more could be saved.

And finally, we have the legal profession, which has become increasingly entangled in health care. The legal complexity of medical practice and administration now requires many hospitals to retain full-time legal counsel. Malpractice litigation and so-called defensive medicine (excessive diagnostic testing) consume considerable physician time and expense, with malpractice premiums alone costing \$5 billion in 1983.

The effect of malpractice litigation on the quality of care is at best uncertain. Litigation is an inefficient and capricious way to assure quality care. Between 66 and 80 percent of malpractice premiums are consumed by legal costs and insurance overhead, yet while 8 percent of doctors are sued each year, fewer than 300 verdicts favor the patients. Even assuming that many cases are settled without trial, the financial benefits to patients are tiny compared with those to lawyers.

A national no-fault compensation system for iatrogenic damage or error, modeled on the Swedish malpractice system or New Zealand's accident compensation system, would compensate patients more fairly and reduce legal fees. Considerable savings would also result from the abolition of incentives for defensive medicine, estimated to cost about \$15 billion annually. Based on the lower figure, and assuming that some of this potential saving has already been included in our calculation of administrative costs and profits, legal reform might yield savings of at least \$15 billion.

In the light of all of the above inefficiencies and waste—amounting to some \$138 billion by our most conservative estimates—it is striking that most health care “experts” see cost control and equality in health care as contradictory. We believe that any honest comparison of our current system to those of the countries closest to us in culture and history clearly shows the superiority of socialized medicine. We think that most Americans would prefer such a system to the preservation of a private system that protects profit and privilege while remaining blind to waste and want. ◀

Steffie Woolhandler and **David U. Himmelstein** are physicians who teach at the Harvard Medical School. This article is adapted from a chapter in a recently published book, *Why the United States Does Not Have a National Health Program*, edited by Vicente Navarro.

NATIONALISM

Facade of tolerance torn down

Last month, a large banner appeared at New Delhi's railway station. Perhaps unintentionally, it offered an ironic epitaph not only to India's founding principle of secularism, but to the entire 20th century with its dreams of workers uniting to create a wholesome world. It simply said, "The Northern Railway Workers' Union welcomes the *kar sevaks*."

The *kar sevaks*, or volunteers, to whom the vanguard of India's organized labor was extending its hand, were none other than the saffron-clad, pickax-toting Hindu hordes who descended on the northern Indian city of Ayodhya early last month and razed the 464-year-old Babri Masjid mosque.

In the rubble this rabble left behind lay the ruins of the idea of India as a pluralistic society, tolerant and respectful of minority religions. And on the top of the heap lay India's constitu-

India's liberal, forward-looking nationalism is giving way to an aggressive, humorless and xenophobic nationalism.

By Meera Nanda

tion, which had been unable to protect a Muslim place of worship.

The change in Indian society since the Nehruvian era is palpable. The India I encountered after nearly eight years of living in the U.S. was not the country I grew up in, the country I still see in my dreams. I had returned home to grieve over my father's death. I found myself mourning the passing of the older social order that my father, an ardent anti-imperialist, had helped create when India won its independence in 1947. I could sense all around me the liberal, forward-looking nationalism that my father had raised me on giving way to an aggressive, humorless and xenophobic nationalism. This populist nationalism calls itself *Hindutva*—roughly Hinduness—and is intent on carrying out a "cultural cleansing" of India's composite culture.

The destruction of the mosque in Ayodhya is only the most dramatic and visible aspect of *Hindutva*. Hindu radicals have long staked

a claim to the site where this mosque stood. They claim—without any firm archaeological evidence—that a temple marking the birthplace of the Hindu god, Rama, existed on this site before the 16th century Mogul emperor Babar razed it to build a mosque bearing his name. Now, Hindu militants insist, it is the Hindus' turn to regain their pride by demolishing the mosque and building a Rama temple on the exact location. This deadly logic, which can only lead to violence and mayhem, is presented as a simple question of justice for the allegedly persecuted Hindu majority.

The Hindu fanatics got their wish last month. But the seeds of this tragedy were planted way back in 1949 when Hindu militants smuggled idols of Rama into the mosque. Throughout most of the intervening years, the mosque remained a "disputed structure," with both communities fighting for access in the state courts.

The dispute, however, hardly provoked any great passion among ordinary people. That changed in the early '80s when Hindu political parties, especially the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), or World Hindu Council, and its political arm, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), or the Indian People's Party, decided to make this decrepit old mosque their electoral battleground. At the time, the parties were just emerging from a long political exile. Their opposition to Indira Gandhi's emergency rule had given them a new respectability they wanted to cash in on. A politically motivated court decision in 1986 opened the mosque to Hindu worshippers, while denying the Muslims access. Since then, the Hindu parties have been agitating for building a Rama temple at the very site of the mosque's sanctum sanctorum.

Looking back, the VHP and BJP couldn't have chosen a more potent—or poisonous—symbol than Rama's putative birthplace. Rama ranks pretty high in the Hindu pantheon

and has a tremendous emotional appeal for most Indians, non-Hindus included. Portraying this popular god as being held hostage by the "alien" Muslims was calculated to arouse passions.

Not surprisingly, these passions turned into votes. In the elections between 1984 and 1991, BJP seats in the Parliament shot up from just two to 178 out of 544. Meanwhile, in 1992 alone, the BJP's membership nearly tripled to 9.5 million, drawing a huge cadre of educated and unemployed urban youth. It is a sign of the decay of the quality of India's democracy that the demolition of the mosque is expected to strengthen the BJP's chances of winning the national elections.

Why should there now be such an upsurge of Hindu militancy? The answer lies in the peculiarly Indian interpretation of secularism which, given the pressures of electoral democracy, has tended to divide the society along religious, caste and ethnic lines. Lopsided economic development, moreover, is providing young and willing foot soldiers for the religious right's holy war on democracy, the constitution and the non-Hindu minorities.

India's brand of secularism does not demand a separation of religion from politics. The framers of the constitution accepted the broad British view of the Indian people as steeped in religiosity and living in compartmentalized religious and caste-based communities. The Indian interpretation of secularism thus came to mean not the removal of religious, communal and caste idioms from the affairs of the state—which was considered impossible—but treating all religious communities equally and fostering cooperation between them. The constitutional injunction was therefore not that the state shall not interfere in matters of religion, but only that it shall not pick one religion for undue interference.

There was only one flaw in this supposedly "authentic" arrangement: most of the leaders of India's nationalist movement, from Gandhi to Nehru, were upper-caste Hindus. Despite their best intentions, they tended to equate national interests with upper-caste Hindu interests. The accommodation of diverse communities gave way to political opportunism. The art of nurturing communal "vote banks" to win elections was perfected by Indira Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi continued the practice by couching his agenda in Hindu terms and occasionally throwing a crumb at the Muslim minority to retain it within the Congress Party's fold.

One of his most disastrous decisions was to appease the orthodox Muslims in 1986 by letting the Muslim community retain Islamic personal law. Later, to mollify the Hindu radicals who were angered by this decision, Gandhi's gov-

ernment pressured a state court to open the Babri Masjid to Hindu devotees, setting the stage for last month's demolition.

The BJP and other Hindu militant organizations, meanwhile, made political gains out of such concessions. They portrayed the granting of Islamic personal law to Muslims as the "pseudo-secularists" "pampering" the minorities. This, coupled with the biased presentation of Muslim rule in Mogul India, whipped up resentment among a large segment of middle-class Hindus. The dynamic is not very different from that in Hitler's Germany, where the majority was made to feel persecuted by a "privileged" minority.

Disastrously for India, this communal dynamic coincides with a deep economic crisis. The recent economic liberalization has fueled an exceptionally odious and lumpen mode of development. Even while most production and accumulation remains primitive, the urban middle class—with the help of the state and multinational corporations—has developed ultra-modern consumer habits.

This burgeoning middle class is in a hurry to get richer. It has no patience for issues like poverty and inequality, which is one reason the passion politics unleashed by Hindu bigots finds a resonance with them. The Hindu ideologues do not demand action on behalf of the degraded lower castes even among the Hindus. Instead, their purpose is to turn attention to the "enemies of the nation," the "pampered" minorities.

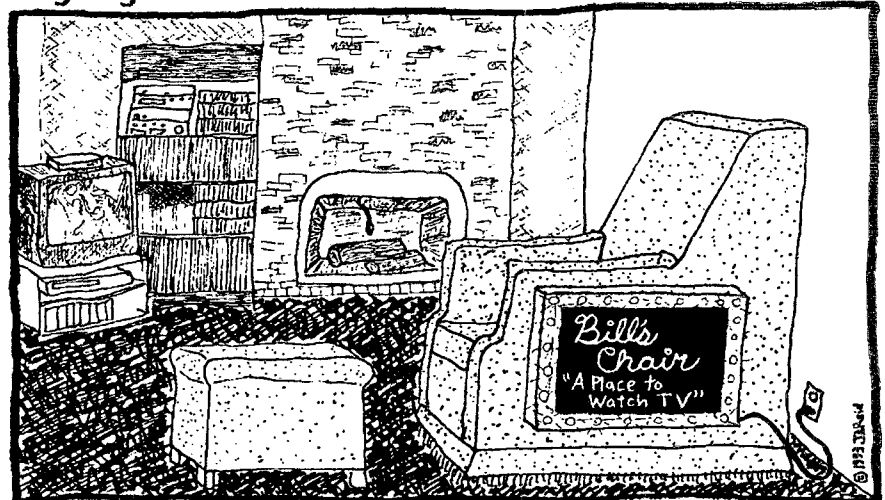
Although India's left and progressive forces are in disarray, the left must forget its differences with Congress and other secular parties and present a joint secular front to defeat the Hindu right. It must spare no effort in convincing the Indian people that the future lies with democracy and secularism. India simply can't afford to turn its back on these principles it has struggled so long to uphold.

Meera Nanda is an editorial writer for the *Daily Gazette* in Schenectady, N.Y.

ROUGH CUTS

By JA Reid

Signage of the Times



FOREIGN INVESTMENT

Up for grabs

Should foreign investment be more closely watched and regulated, or should it be allowed to proceed without supervision?

By John B. Judis
WASHINGTON D.C.

Foreign investment is one of those issues that only intrudes into public consciousness when something spectacular occurs—such as the Japanese buying Rockefeller Center in New York. But it has quietly become a very significant part of the American economy.

Foreign investment has increased almost 20 percent a year since 1977, and foreign affiliates now account for about 13 percent of American manufacturing. And since the mid-'80s, Japanese companies have been gobbling up American high-technology firms. According to an Economic Strategy Institute study, Japanese companies acquired 426 American high-tech companies between October 1988 and October 1992.

Is this foreign investment good or bad for the country? Should it be more closely watched and regulated, or should it be allowed to proceed without supervision? The Bush administration predictably did nothing—even ignoring the Exon-Florio amendment to the 1988 trade law that mandated the White House to block foreign investments that threaten national security.

Bill Clinton has not indicated what he will do. Moreover, he has appointed two people—Laura Tyson as chair of the Council of Economic Advisers and Robert Reich as secretary of labor—who hold diametrically opposed views of what should be done.

Reich opposes any regulations that would apply solely to foreign-owned firms in the U.S. "Positive nationalism," Reich wrote in *The Work of Nations*, "would draw no distinctions based on the nationalities of a firm's shareholders or top executives."

Reich wants government subsidies to be granted equally to American and foreign-owned firms on the grounds that both employ American workers. "Rather than increase the profitability of corporations flying its flag, or enlarge the worldwide holdings of its citizens," Reich wrote, "a nation's economic role is to improve its citizens' standard of living by enhancing the value of what they contribute to the world economy."

Reich's position sounds right in principle, but it is based on a false empirical assumption about American and foreign-owned firms. Reich makes his case by citing instances where American-owned firms like Zenith import their TV sets into the country, while foreign-owned firms like Hitachi manufacture them here. But these examples are both atypical and misleading.

American-owned firms still account for 78 percent of manufacturing assets and 70 percent of the sales in the U.S. They do their research and development and design in the U.S. and buy their parts from American suppliers. By contrast, many foreign firms merely assemble goods in the U.S. to avoid the threat of tariffs. According to the American Electronics Association, Japanese makers of color televisions in the U.S. import 72 percent of their parts, including the most sophisticated. They also do their research and design in Japan.

Reich's argument also misses the point. No one advocates granting equal subsidies to Toshiba in Los Angeles and Apple Computer in Singapore. And the predominant concern is not about foreign firms establishing plants in the U.S., but about their buying up American firms.

Laura Tyson thinks there is reason to be concerned. In her recent book, *Who's Bashing Whom?*, she argues that some foreign takeovers threaten not only national security

but also the commercial viability of American firms. "If foreign investment," Tyson writes, "knocks out one or more domestic competitors, either by buying them out directly or by squeezing them out gradually, the result may be a concentrated industry both nationally and globally, with the remaining firms able to exercise significant market power."

She is particularly worried about Japanese firms monopolizing key segments of the advanced technology market and then withholding crucial parts and materials from American competitors. According to a Defense Science Board report, Nikon withheld components critical for semiconductor manufacture from American firms for 24 months after they were made available to Japanese firms. Tyson wants the Justice Department to monitor cases of foreign investment that might create these kind of monopolies and to use, if necessary, antitrust action to block them.

In contrast to Reich, who believes foreign investment should be welcomed regardless of its source, Tyson also wants the U.S. to demand reciprocity from the countries whose firms invest in the U.S. While Western Europe has been open to American firms, Japan remains relatively closed to foreign investment. As of 1986, foreign affiliates accounted for 1 percent of total sales in Japan.

Tyson is certainly right about the potential pitfalls of foreign investment. She also has a more realistic view than Reich of what foreign companies do in America. But just as Reich doesn't acknowledge the dangers of foreign investment, Tyson doesn't sufficiently acknowledge its benefits in providing jobs and capital and in introducing new technology and work organization.

It might make sense for American multinationals to

demand reciprocity, but it does not make as much sense from the standpoint of American workers. It is more important to figure out ways to force foreign—and American—corporations to make their entire products here.

As Robin Gaster, the president of North Atlantic Research in Washington and a former colleague of Tyson at the University of California, argues in *Foreign Policy*, the U.S. might be best off following the example of the European Community (EC). The EC actively encourages foreign investment and discourages imports, but it also places local content requirements on what foreign affiliates produce. The TV sets Japan manufactures in Europe have an average local content of 79 percent. Toyota agreed to produce cars with 80 percent local content in Great Britain.

Gaster suggests using tariffs to force foreign firms to invest in the U.S., but that won't happen as long as the U.S. remains committed to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The U.S. could, however, adopt content requirements or make subsidies to both American and foreign-owned companies contingent upon their products having a high domestic content. That would satisfy Reich's legitimate concern about runaway American shops and Tyson's equally legitimate concern about foreign firms like Ricoh that merely establish "screwdriver" plants in the U.S.

Reich and Tyson might be amenable to such an approach, but would Clinton? Indeed, will the new president adopt any kind of policy toward foreign investment? Developing a policy will be an important test of Clinton's seriousness—and of his independence from the foreign lobbyists who contributed to his campaign and are now circling the White House like vultures.



'WHY (AH) YES, HE JUST CAME ON THE MARKET... HOW MANY YEN ARE WE TALKING, HERE?'

FINANCE

Saving banks

The banking crisis will not easily disappear despite temporary blips of good news.

By David Moberg

W

orried about budget deficits, yet wanting an economic stimulus, Clintonites might be tempted by the offer of a gift from the banking industry. Just provide us a little regulatory relief, bankers told the recent Little Rock economic conference, and banks can pump \$86 billion into the economy, four times what Clinton hoped to provide in his public spending package.

But beware of bankers bearing gifts. The \$86 billion is sheer fantasy. The prescription is bad medicine that would worsen—not cure—an ailing financial system. Besides, overly tough regulations aren't the problem. When pressed, bankers admit they aren't lending now because there isn't demand for loans—or reasonably profitable opportunities—in a still stagnant economy.

Rather than receive a

stimulative bonus from the banks, the Clinton administration is likely to get a big bill for bank bailouts—as well as new bills for the ongoing thrift bailout and a crisis of private pension fund guarantees. Besides sweeping up this financial wreckage, Clinton also faces the politically unpalatable but crucial task of shaping a new domestic financial order out of the ruins of the old.

The crisis has been in the making for many years and will not easily disappear despite temporary blips of good news. Last year's bank industry profits were healthy largely because interest rates banks paid for money dropped sharply.

Although many individual, small or medium-sized banks are currently on sound footing, nearly one-fourth of the nation's largest bank holding companies are in deep trouble, perhaps insolvent if their assets were measured according to their real, depressed market value. Also, the industry itself is still in peril because of the collapse of the New Deal financial regulatory framework.

Clinton may have breathing room now. Yet without drastic reform that brings all financial institutions under a common set of rules, the country and his administration will pay a much greater price in a few years, not just in taxpayer liabilities but also in weaker economic performance.

Reviving the banking system could be very costly. In their study, *Banking on the Brink*, finance experts Roger J. Vaughan and Edward W. Hill argue that 1,179 of the nation's 12,000 banks—including such giants as Citicorp, Chase Manhattan and Wells Fargo—may now be technically insolvent if assets are counted at market value. If problem banks were closed now, taxpayers might have to pay \$75 billion, but the bailout cost could easily double, they argue. Raising capital for weak banks could cost \$46 billion or more; restoring the Bank Insurance Fund would cost \$28 billion. By these calculations, banks would be taking as much as they're giving.

The post-New Deal financial system was neatly divided into fiefdoms that helped assure institutional profitability and security. The rules also gave government some useful indirect control over the nation's money and credit system. But '70s inflation accelerated introduction of new competitors. The financial volatility of the '80s—abetted by legislative and administrative deregulation—further disrupted the established order. As banks lost many of their old secure sources of deposits and profit, they pursued a wide variety of new and usually riskier strategies.

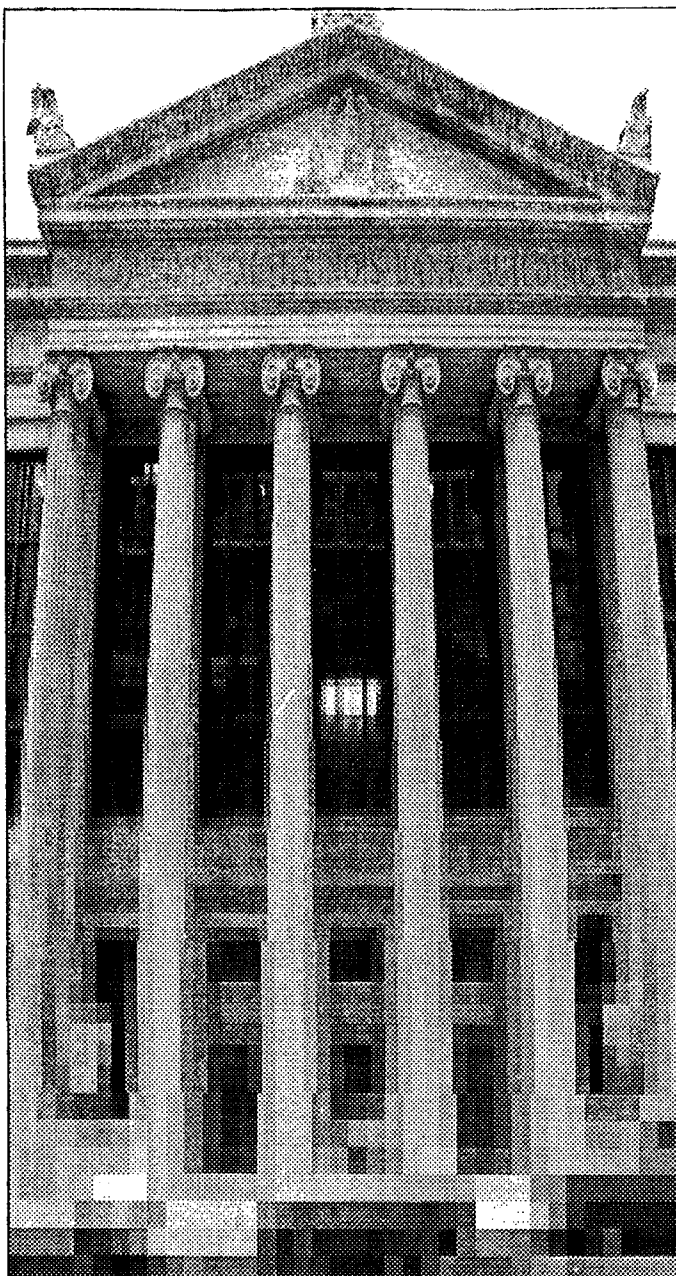
A parallel banking system also emerged, argue former congressional economist Jane D'Arista and Tom Schlesinger, director of the Southern Finance Project, in a forthcoming paper from the Economic Policy Institute. Outside the web of regulation, money market mutual funds lured depositors away from banks. Finance companies—such as General Motors Acceptance Corp. (GMAC),

Household Finance Corp. or GE Capital Corp.—captured much of banks' most lucrative lending business, both to individuals and businesses. The two new institutions fed each other: money market mutual funds were the major purchasers of the commercial paper (unsecured short term borrowing) issued by the finance companies.

These finance companies grew much faster than banks in the '80s. By 1992, their assets totaled 26 percent of domestic commercial bank assets compared to 16 percent 12 years earlier, and finance companies provided business about two-thirds of the amount of credit that banks did. They gained at the banks' expense, D'Arista and Schlesinger claim, partly because they did not operate with the same requirements as banks, such as maintaining capital and loan loss reserves or meeting community lending standards (though banks often flouted these regulations). Ironically, D'Arista and Schlesinger contend, banks provided loan guarantees and lines of credit to finance companies that fostered the growth of their competition. Although banks collected modest fees for these services, they also exposed themselves—and ultimately government insurance funds—to risk of finance company failures.

Now a crisis of the parallel banking system is also emerging. Last November three of the biggest finance companies—GMAC, Westinghouse and Chrysler—announced major problems with losses or downgraded credit ratings, leading to sales or cutbacks of their operations. Like many troubled banks, some finance companies were burdened with failing commercial real estate and junk debt.

What are the options for public policy? In their book, *The Future of American Banking*, economists James Barth, Dan Brumbaugh and Robert Litan argue—much as the big



banks have—that banks must be allowed new freedom to compete (for example, nationwide banking; dealing in securities, insurance and other products; and non-financial corporate ownership of banks). They worry that measures designed to strengthen the banking system, such as setting stiffer capital standards or assessing higher bank insurance premiums, will weaken banks by increasing their costs.

Yet as Vaughan and Hill note, banks have already been granted much of this freedom through regulatory reinterpretation. Besides, they say, there's no assurance that such freedom will strengthen the banks, especially those that are poorly managed.

They favor changing accounting procedures so bank books reflect current market value of their assets, then automatic and uniform regulatory intervention whenever banks slip below new, tougher minimum standards of capital holdings, such as stockholders' equity. Currently, Hill says, weak banks drain strong ones and it's time for a shakeout and market discipline. Banks have lost their historic centrality in the financial system, and thus closing even big banks won't provoke a crisis but just clear deadwood, Hill argues.

Pouring in more private or public capital to revive weakened banks, as Felix Rohatyn of Lazard Freres has recommended, simply keeps unneeded banks afloat, according to Hill, an economics professor at Cleveland State University.

Over the past year bank regulation has often taken contradictory directions. While Vice-President Dan Quayle took the lead in weakening some measures to make the banking system more sound and bank insurance premium hikes were drastically rolled back last September, new legislation went into effect that gave bank examiners more power and set new standards of disclosure and maintenance of capital reserves. More capital makes banks better able to weather economic storms but also reduces the amount they can lend. And on December 19, legislation went into effect that provides for automatic intervention when banks sink too low,

although there are loopholes through which banks may escape.

D'Arista and Schlesinger claim that neither the newly bolstered regulation, a tough market discipline strategy, nor the industry's deregulatory reform and expanded powers address the changes wrought by the collapse of the old system. Instead, all financial institutions that accept funds or make, sell or buy loans and securities would be placed under the same regulatory regime.

Under their proposal, there would be comparable rules for all firms governing capital, risk, concentration and strict separation of different functions within a company. All financial institutions would have to comply with Community Reinvestment Act requirements and all fair lending rules. Every financial firm would have to be licensed and periodically renew that license. In addition to stronger industry self-regulation, they advocate greater disclosure and vigorous, uniform regulation.

Deposit insurance is socially useful, since few customers can judge a bank's soundness, but it carries a risk: it may encourage rash behavior by managers. Nearly every reformer seeks some change, such as linking it to some evaluation of an institution's risk. Breaking with the current system, D'Arista argues that total deposits of an individual be insured up to a certain amount no matter where they are but that institutions should not be insured (except for bank funds used in the system of check payments). Regulators

could then more freely let bad banks collapse, and taxpayer liabilities would decrease.

With uniform and comprehensive rules, banks, finance companies, mutual funds and the whole panoply of institutions could battle on the proverbial even playing field rather than exploit advantages of regulatory evasion. Once again, government may be more able to exercise its influence over the credit and money supply and keep tabs on the risks to the whole financial system.

In fashioning this new system, Schlesinger contends, government must pay attention to specific outcomes, not just overall rules, and create a system "that's more stable, resilient, diffusely owned and controlled, more transparent and much more responsive." Besides eliminating regulatory inequities, government should "introduce or strengthen institutional forms, like development banks and other local intermediaries that do what banks used to do"—or, in other words, assess promising opportunities for profitable economic development.

Hill believes market forces will lead banks to evolve not into financial conglomerates but more specialized entities, such as retail bank systems, big business-oriented merchant banks and "boutique" lenders specializing in small business and community needs. But Schlesinger and many other advocates of development banks—that is, banks actively working to promote economic growth in a community—believe that government should help launch such banks, possibly with resources from the Resolution Trust Corp. Clinton, a community development bank enthusiast who worked with Chicago's South Shore Bank spinoff in Arkansas, is likely to respond favorably.

In the short run, D'Arista says, the best medicine for the banks is financial and interest rate stability and general economic growth. "Muddle through is an ideal option," she argues, in contrast with those, like Hill, who would shut down weak banks quickly. But eventually, she says, "we have to restructure the whole system."

"The most significant advice the Clinton administration could get is that it no longer will work to approach the financial industry piece by piece," Schlesinger contends. "It's all part of the same marketplace."

D'Arista and Schlesinger insist that competition, diversity and lack of concentration are essential. Dominance by big institutions, they believe, encourages destructive fads and discourages attention to small and innovative business. If their proposed legislation became law, D'Arista argues, financial institutions might depend less on paper entrepreneurialism and pay more attention to the borrower and his or her needs.

Ultimately, the rationale for the financial system must be how well it sustains and nurtures the rest of the economy. Although Clinton will find no short-term fix from the banks—and lots of short-term grief—a major overhaul of the whole financial service industry is key to long-range economic vitality. ◀

WHY THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HAVE A NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Edited by Vicente Navarro

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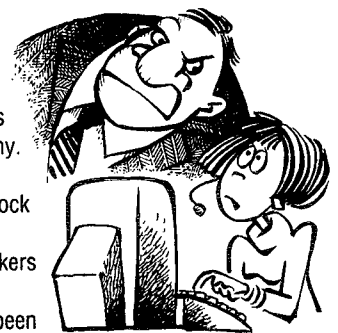
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DIALOGUE

IN EDUCATION, THERE'S CHOICE,
AND THEN THERE'S CHOICE

By Allen Graubard

I have been working as a teacher and grant writer in the Oakland, Calif., public schools for several years. Oakland is a good example of the urban, underfunded and minority-dominated school systems that are the main subject of Gregory Squires' article "Economic development" is killing education" (*ITT*, Dec. 28). Squires correctly notes that "political debate on critical issues is blunted by a narrowing of discussion down to a handful of seemingly attractive bromides." By this he seems to mean that "choice" is the only idea in the political arena, and he thinks it is a bad idea, distracting from the basic problem, which is inadequate and unfair funding systems.

By "choice," Squires means the free-market "voucher" system described in the widely discussed study by John Chubb and Terry Moe. He favorably quotes a critique of their proposal by Ray Marshall and Marc Tucker in their own recent study of ideal education reform. (Incidentally, the Chubb-Moe study is intelligently argued and focuses on a fundamental and unsolved problem, namely the immense difficulty of changing highly bureaucratic and self-serving systems, including management and unions. One may disagree with Chubb and Moe, as I do, but it is gratuitously insulting to treat the Brookings Institution support of their work as a "veneer of intellectual respectability," as Squires did.)

The Marshall-Tucker book, although providing a detailed critique of the Chubb-Moe market plan, itself pro-

poses an extensive system of "choice" *within* the public school system, with groups of educators offering a wide variety of programs, being held accountable and even receiving financial incentives for successful performance. (The Marshall-Tucker book is a useful presentation of what will clearly be the educational reform perspective for high schools and job training supporting by the Clinton administration, as the cabinet appointments of Robert Reich and Richard Riley show.)

Accordingly, people involved in education reform discussions should not oversimplify the concept of "choice" and allow the voucher supporters to own the word. In Oakland, for example, we have several "partnership academies" for mainly disadvantaged high school students (most of the district enrollment is so classifiable), and these programs have to be "chosen"—it certainly wouldn't make sense to "require" students to be part of the "Health and Bioscience Academy," the program I work with. In the best of situations, teachers also have some "choice" in order to start and teach in

such programs—the district bureaucracy is not a serious source of meaningful reform at school-site levels. Clearly, excellent programs like Deborah Meier's Central Park East Secondary School in East Harlem are "choice" programs, and many active teachers committed to progressive reforms support such programs and the "choice" process they require, and they would like to see this process greatly expanded.

Jonathan Kozol, in a recent issue of *The Nation*, argued that teachers, parents and students who are committed to social justice and equity shouldn't support or participate in such programs because he heard Deborah Meier quoted in support of "choice" by the bad corporate forces that are plotting to take over the public schools, and that supporters of such programs were unwittingly giving aid and comfort to the enemies of justice and public schooling. I don't find this argument convincing anymore than I believe I should forswear my support of socialist values because Stalin and Stalinists claimed they represented socialism. No corporations in Oakland are even hinting that they want to take over the schools, and it is hard to see—Chris Whittle's bravado notwithstanding—how smart business people would see inner-city schools as an easy target for profitable investment. It is worth noting that the *only* ballot measure for a statewide "voucher" system during the last election went down to big defeat in Colorado. One can find the same warnings about voucher advocates as agents of corpo-

rate planners poised to dismantle public schooling more than 20 years ago. As far as I can see, every major urban system is still running very much unchanged, still failing miserably in educating poor and minority youth. (Would that the ruling elites were as "successful" in their other nefarious plans, like tax policy, union busting and foreign policy!)

Squires notes that money alone will not guarantee good education, but he doesn't follow up this admission. He states that Kozol's *Savage Inequalities* demonstrated that money is a critical factor, and it certainly is important, though the sense of "critical" is not specified. Actually, it is unclear what accounts of tragically poor districts like East St. Louis or Camden demonstrate. The categories that Squires uses, "the wealthy," who are seceding from the public schools, and "the poor," who are falling farther out of the mainstream, are also not concretely defined; but whatever he means, it seems obvious that the great majority of the country falls into neither category, and the great majority of schools are neither posh New Trier Township High School nor rat-infested dumps in Camden, N.J.

Even in Oakland, where post-Prop 13 school financing means our students get less than half of what high schools in New York City or Cleveland get (and you see how good their results are), you would find quite decent buildings, teachers with salaries much higher than teachers got 25 years ago, a variety of special programs, large numbers of nice computers, new textbooks, decent if not lavish laboratory and sports facilities, partnerships with business and community organizations, school-based health clinics, etc., and neither the teachers nor administrators would accept Squires' description of them and their institutions as "ware-

houses for the urban poor." Which is not to say that these schools are successful on any relevant evaluation measures with the great majority of their populations of poor and disadvantaged minority youth, not in "objective" tests or dropout rates or the acquisition of decent skills or job preparation or conveying the joy of learning—although school personnel will point to the bulletin board with listings

of good colleges, including Harvard, MIT and Berkeley, that have accepted some of their students. (The 16-year-old Vietnamese valedictorian at Oakland Tech this year wanted to go to MIT because he had become interested in Chomsky's linguistics, but decided to accept a scholarship to Harvard. Items like this also raise issues needing serious analysis.)

Whether schools are "good" or "bad" is worth discussing with some complexity. Inequality of funding is certainly unjust and harmful, though it is unlikely that much will be done to carry out the program Kozol proposes—more-than-equalization of funding throughout each state or the whole country, along with massive regional busing programs to integrate schools along racial lines. Although the president recommended to the membership of the National Education Association that they read Kozol's book, I didn't hear even a hint of Clinton calling for high-level equalized school expenditures along with busing for integration. And I don't expect to.

Discussions like those in Kozol's book or in Squires' essay do not adequately address the well-based finding that increased expenditures do not translate into significant improvements in results for the relevant populations of students, when the structure and methods remain the same. As in other areas of social life, like participation of women and minorities in the cabinet or corporate boardrooms, equity is a value independent of results. But the discussion of education reform and what might have serious effects on results must go beyond the throwaway line about money not guaranteeing good results. Comparing rich suburban schools with crumbling inner-city dumps not only leaves out the great majority of schools that are neither, but also ignores the finding that the very same poor minority students who do so badly in the awful schools also do badly, along the same dimensions like dropout, academic success, etc., in the decent and even "excellent" schools. The finding by Christopher Jencks and his associates 20 years ago that most variation in achievement among groups comes *within* schools is still valid.

In Oakland, some high schools with almost 100 percent poor minority populations are rated in the bottom of state achievement lists. In neighboring Berkeley, the high school gets awards for being in the 94th percentile. But for the poor African-American students at "excellent" Berkeley High (where my own son attends and is doing very well), the results are as bad on average as for disadvantaged African-American students in "bad" Oakland high schools.

Many issues are raised by this depressing situation—how "tracking" continues to be a very well-established function of public schooling, where "good" gets applied to schools who get students with the background skills to do well academically independent of the "objective" characteristics of the schools they attend, and how effective the current system would be even with more money. Examining them would take us deep into the issues that those of us who are in the schools face daily. But to argue that without radically changing funding systems and racially integrating urban schools, nothing can really be done and schools will remain failures, is a prescription for irrelevance—however morally justified the indignation is.

Allen Graubard, author of *Free the Children: Radical Reform and the Free School Movement*, is a high school teacher living in Berkeley, Calif.

Poor minority students who do badly in "poor" schools also do badly in "excellent" schools.

I N T H E A R T S

Good medicine

**Lorenzo's Oil
is one medical-
miracle movie
that transcends
and uplifts the
genre.**

By Pat Dowell

It's easy to imagine what detractors will say are the reasons *not* to see *Lorenzo's Oil*, which chronicles a family's astounding struggle to find a treatment for their desperately ill son.

Nobody wants to spend an evening watching a child suffer terribly. Lorenzo Odone was diagnosed with a crippling and fatal disease at the age of five, and the movie zeroes in on every stage of his deterioration—at some length. Like everything else on celluloid for the past two months, the movie is more than two hours long, and it carries that dreaded legend, “based on a true story,” which usually guarantees that what follows is the coarsest fiction. Then again, you can pursue factual fidelity too far. As Lorenzo's devoted father Augusto Odone, Nick Nolte, despite all appearances, speaks with an Italian accent—in subtitles, sometimes! And, finally,

haven't they done a dozen dreadfully uplifting movies of the week about families just like this one?

Lorenzo's Oil, however, demonstrates precisely the unbridgeable gap between television's sanitized symmetry and the thrilling, messy and almost metaphysical thing a brilliant movie can be. It's not polite, it's not discreet, but for 140 minutes you'll be plastered to the screen, exploring the fragility of the flesh and the resilience of the spirit in that extremis known as severe illness. It's worth the time and the shocks.

Director and co-screenwriter George Miller also provides the most sophisticated perspective on the medical establishment, both in its professional and lay divisions, that Hollywood has ever attempted. When Augusto and Michaela Odone (played by Susan Sarandon) were told in 1984 that their son Lorenzo's alarming symptoms of muscle spasms and rage were the first signs of a rare genetically based disease called adrenoleukodystrophy (ALD), they were also told

there was no hope.

The disease was thought to be fatal and fast, and treatments were experimental and palliative. There was an association of stricken families that existed largely to console rather than to marshal resources. (The movie is particularly astute in depicting this organization's subservience to the medical hierarchy.) The Odone's refused to resign themselves.

“We should treat Lorenzo's illness like another country,” Augusto, the World Bank economist, says in the film. (The accent's not half bad, and Nolte conquers it with an impassioned performance.) So he and Michaela, a linguist, set out to learn the disease, as they had studied his international postings—in order to conquer it, sort of the way the World Bank treats developing nations.



Lorenzo's Oil
Directed by George Miller

A former physician, Australian director Miller is not afraid to throw in breathless and lucid conversations about such subjects as fatty acid metabolism and myelin, as the Odone's stake out desks at the library and make chemistry charts at home. But this is *Biochemistry 101* conducted by the gifted action director of *Mad Max* and *The Road Warrior*: Miller treats this material with the same apocalyptic furor he brought to the post-modern outback.



Photos by Mikki Ansin

The movie is full of shocks and violence, but not from guns. The camera lurks in Lorenzo's bedclothes, snoops among the tubes and machinery of invasive medicine, settles unflinchingly on Lorenzo (played by Zack O'Malley Greenburg and a succession of young actors) as he grows older and more disabled. The Odone's circle the wagons around him like Max and the survivors protecting their last tanker of gasoline from the lunatics.

There is an element of *mysterioso*, too, just like the *Mad Max* movies, in the way Miller handles the haunting presence of Lorenzo's playmate Omouri, a teenager who befriends Lorenzo during the family's African sojourn, glimpsed at the film's beginning. Omouri, played by Maduka Steady, is recruited to Lorenzo's bedside by Augusto, and becomes a new-age faithful retainer, a healing vestige of pre-technological society, and the only attendant who satisfies Michaela's stern standard of devotion.

Lorenzo's Oil, incredibly, is a mythic action movie, replete with suspense and chases (intellectual and emotional ones), but set in a sickroom, in the pages of textbooks, in doctors' offices. A child whose heroism consists of breathing from day to day, frightened mothers and fathers, and stoical medicine men are its heroes and villains.

Sometimes characters seem to be simultaneously heroes and villains, as in the case of Peter Ustinov's portrayal of the

avuncular ALD expert who is dragged into action by the Odone's. And Michaela is not exactly blessed with the forbearance of Mother Teresa. Along with the story of the Odone's pressure on doctors to find an effective treatment (the oil of the title, which the Odone's ultimately discover and produce themselves), this is the story of Michaela's ferocity as her child's protector.

Some of Sarandon and Nolte's scenes together have the sublime synchronicity of an operatic duet, but it is Sarandon, probably headed for an Oscar nomination, who produces most of the fireworks. Michaela, who is clearly stunned in the movie when she learns that this genetic defect is passed from mothers to sons, treats everyone but Lorenzo with a mercilessness that is born of her own misplaced sense of guilt.

She consigns unenthusiastic nurses to the outer darkness as Lorenzo's condition worsens, his brain cells dying and his nerves stripped of the material that allows them to pass messages to his muscles and senses. Any communication with him begins to require a leap of faith. Michaela hovers, harries, beats up on loved ones, including her own devoted sister, and generally becomes a fearsome and wrathful angel of mercy.

Sarandon admirably refrains from softening Michaela for an audience that wants reassurance in this dark night of the soul. But then the movie as a whole refrains from smoothing over disappointments. The film's intelligence lies in its respect for details and realities, which is why the end titles come as a great relief. They reveal how much the Odone's success—bittersweet for Lorenzo—has meant to other children.

"All this struggle, it may have been for somebody else's kid," Augusto tells Michaela almost fearfully. As the final scenes indicate, the Odone's have moved on to a new crusade in research and treatment, determined to help Lorenzo repair the profound damage done to his body.

There is no question that *Lorenzo's Oil* is a story of genuine heroism, and a timely reminder that one's health is too important a matter to be left solely to the medical industry—something to remember as the Clinton administration wrestles with restructuring health care in America. Of course, the Odone's had resources that poorer families would not—health insurance, enough wherewithal to make possible their impressive sacrifices of time and money, and, according at least to a few scenes in the movie, Augusto's supportive work environment at the World Bank.

Such underlying facts do not diminish the Odone's dedication and achievement, but only point up how rare and instructive is their struggle and the movie that does it justice. Fertile ground is required to grow even heroism like theirs, which, in a just world, would be unnecessary. ◀

IN PRINT

Pop culture in perspective

By Pat Aufderheide

Madonna as icon. Rambo and Reagan. The self-nurturing secrets of Harlequin romances. It looks like no piece of pop culture is safe from cultural studies these days.

Cultural studies has in the last decade expanded through and occasionally even beyond the liberal arts campuses of universities. But what is cultural studies? In what ought to be the definitive volume, on poundage alone—the 788-page anthology *Cultural Studies* (based on the papers and proceedings of a conference)—the editors describe it as an interdisciplinary, eclectic study of the relationship between “cultural practice” and power. Although American commercial pop culture is its prime territory, its theoretical roots are in the work of Stuart Hall and other left-wing English and continental intellectuals. However different the methods and subjects of each researcher, cultural studies always gets back to how world-views are shaped.

Those are questions that inform any serious inquiry about social change. How are people’s understandings of what is possible shaped by what they see and hear and learn and dream of? For instance, what are the social consequences of taking aspirations for love or peace of mind and using them to sell detergent and deodorant? Are commercially produced violent and sexist movie fantasies a useful blowing off of psychic steam or a dangerous incentive to brutality? If people can make their own media and have it be seen, does that change their notion of where they fit into the world?

It’s less easy than you might think to answer such questions. They are more often answered by attitude than with analysis. Analysis grounded in data is harder still to find. In academe especially, it’s easy to forget the concrete, and instead to sink into a morass of dense speculations on such abstract critical concepts as The Other, The Spectacle, resistance, empowerment and postmodern consciousness.

While some of the essays in *Cultural Studies* read almost as if they are parodies of themselves (such as Lidia Curti’s

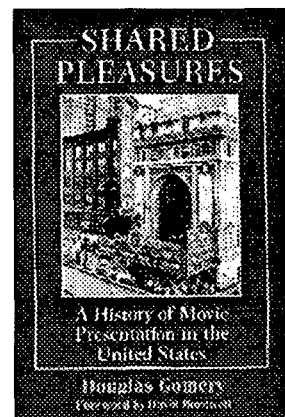
on the “fabulation of the female”) some of them nicely demonstrate the way a large-minded curiosity can illuminate a culture as resolutely anti-intellectual as ours. Among others, Janice Radway’s essay on the Book-of-the-Month Club deserves reading. Discussions from the conference that generated this book also follow many of the papers, and are an excellent reminder of the fluidity of debate in the field.

It’s really not surprising that theory has threatened completely to overwhelm garden-variety fact in cultural studies. Cultural studies has been plagued by the ephemeral or trendy nature of many of its objects of study. Furthermore, not only is it often difficult to analyze the ways in which people actually use and own their popular culture (are we talking about dupes here, or savvy self-empowerers?)—it’s often hard even to find a reasonably representative group to analyze. Finally, would-be analysts of popular culture tend to slight the most important shaping force behind commercial popular culture: the economics of entertainment businesses.

Three recently published books demonstrate that sophisticated studies of popular culture can and are being done, on the three arenas of text, audience and context.

In *60 Minutes and the News*, Richard Campbell, a professor of communications at the University of Michigan, masterfully demystifies one of the longest running hits of U.S. commercial television. Writing like a thoughtful journalist, he focuses on the shows themselves, not on their production or audience reaction. He sees *60 Minutes* as one of America’s great storytellers, a show that sets out each week to make sense of the world for us. In doing so, he tells us something about what we need, and something about how you transform the welter of details in life into a story that makes sense.

His analysis goes beyond the megaseries *60 Minutes*. It also tells you a lot about TV news generally. Campbell finds that a



Cultural Studies

Eds. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler
Routledge, 788 pp.
\$24.95

60 Minutes and the News: A Mythology for Middle America

Richard Campbell
University of Illinois Press, 280 pp., \$29.95

For Enquiring Minds: A Cultural Study of Supermarket Tabloids

S. Elizabeth Bird
University of Tennessee Press, 234 pp., \$14.95

Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States

Douglas Gomery
University of Wisconsin Press, 381 pp., \$15.95

good news story never calls attention to itself as a story. It's grounded in our notions of "common sense." *60 Minutes'* common sense rests on "Middle American" populist pieties, notions of family loyalty, and of course the central role of the individual in society.

60 Minutes, he finds, employs certain formulas to turn the events of our world into stories we find satisfaction in. The reporters aren't just reporters. They're detectives; they're therapists; they're our surrogate adventurers. They position themselves as the good guys against the bad guys in visual as well as verbal ways. When the villain of the piece shows up (and there's always a villain) the camera zooms in to rob him or her of room to control the image on screen.

The stories *60 Minutes* tells, says Campbell, have much to recommend them, principally their ability to reintroduce the human dimension to social drama. But he also finds that *60 Minutes*—with its up-close storytelling, hero-and-villain, detective-story format—often milks human passion for its salability, and it easily lets us pretend that we understand an issue whose social dimensions have been drained out of it.

In *For Enquiring Minds*, Elizabeth Bird explores the phenomenon of the tabs—the *National Enquirer*, *Star*, *Globe* and other denizens of the journalistic deep. Surprisingly, for enterprises that sell millions of copies each week, their history is written on water; no one, apparently, keeps back issues or microfiches them for an archive. Their audience is entirely unresearched, even by the papers themselves; reporters and executives guess cheerfully at who reads them.

Bird recovers the business history of today's tabs, which began in the '60s on the backs of blood-and-gore scandal sheets. From interviews with staffers, she gleans the methods that result in amazing stories ("I've Been Married to Space Alien for 12 Years") without a reporter ever having to leave the office. She analyzes the form, finding that the gripping narratives are timeless (reporters use clip files and factoids from decades ago) and that they send a message of fatalism

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My mother is the Ted Bundy of the granny set — I have no feeling for her! — DAUGHTER ARLEEN

RICHARD GERE

DUOI This pretty boy has slowly lost his sex appeal. He was a hunk in *American Gigolo*, *Breathless*, *An Officer and a Gentleman* and *Pretty Woman*, but thankfully, he's taking less and less off these days. He's too thin with too little

and hope through blind luck.

Bird has actually found tab readers who want to talk. Her pursuit of the readers—of the reception of popular culture—is part of a welcome trend in cultural studies to go beyond textual analysis to audience response. Thanks to an announcement placed in one of the tabs, letter writers showered Bird with explanations of why they read and what they expect from their contact with the tabs.

The letter writers, while falling into several groups (including one that reads the tabs ironically, to reinforce their sense of superiority), often match the fate-and-luck message of the tabs' stories. They are, by and large, "people with little real power, who would dearly love to have more," but who aren't interested in social change to get it. And there are millions of them.

Douglas Gomery's *Shared Pleasures* excavates, finally, the history of movie exhibition—the place where, in the early days of the movies, the business was defined. The

established film scholar's coolly presented history includes both the rise of the great movie palaces and the blooming of alternative circuits such as those for African-Americans and for art film lovers. And through his methodical pursuit of clues from movie grosses to architectural designs, he transforms our understanding of this business.

It has long been an article of faith that the early movies' main target was the industrial working class. But from the days of piggybacking onto vaudeville, which was a middle-class entertainment, movie impresarios fled the poor and pushed constantly to make moviegoing a genteel luxury suitable for the whole family. The great Balaban & Katz theaters of the '20s were built as extravagant palaces, with free childcare, gloved ushers and smoking rooms. The Depression hollowed out the experience, but the expectation was established.

The movies themselves are secondary, in Gomery's story, as explanations for the growth of the business. More important were such developments as chain-store retailing (on which the Loew's theatrical empire was modeled), cheap air conditioning, and the national adoption of the popcorn habit. Indeed, Balaban & Katz became an industry leader by taking the movies other exhibitors spurned, depending on magnificent theaters, cool air and stage shows to draw dependable crowds.

Through his economic perspective, Gomery revisits other received wisdom. In the '50s, he finds, television didn't cause the decline of the movies, since attendance plummeted before TV was generally used. It was the baby boom and suburbia that did it. Parents spent more on more kids, and moved away from the grand old theaters—eventually establishing new trends, such as the drive-in and the shopping mall cineplex.

Shared Pleasures again and again debunks the myths of technological innovation as social transformer. From Theater TV to Sensurround to the laser disc, the history of the movies is littered with new tech that failed to find its niche.

Gomery's approach demonstrates the importance of looking at context in cultural studies. However revealing the acres of prose written about the western and the melodrama, the view from the theater manager's office is essential for understanding how the movies fit into the American cultural landscape.

Each of these books differently probes the meaning of "what we take for granted," and justifiably so. Perhaps the greatest value of cultural studies is that it creates questions where before there was only, as Richard Campbell calls it, common sense.

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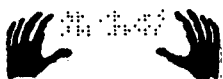
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Join us the week of February 7, 1993 to urge newly-inaugurated President Clinton to make the unconditional restoration of Haiti's elected government a top priority. We can offer organizing suggestions, materials and logistical support.

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Continued from page 40

exactly in proportion to income, it won't matter how much you earn. And here's the happiest thought: if all such payments are progressive in *greater* proportion to income, then the rich will actually be poorer than the poor. Goldman, Sachs veeps will vie for janitor jobs, and bankers will furiously fax résumés for bus-driver spots.

So, Mr. President, we applaud your plan to worm your way into the tightly snapped wallets of the rich. But be mindful of history. Raise their income taxes, to be sure, but also give them all the stamps they want—at a buck apiece. ◀ **Francis Flaherty** is a freelance journalist who is on the editorial board of the *Progressive*.

C A L E N D A R

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▷ CHICAGO, IL

January 30, 1993

The U.S. Military in Somalia: A New Kind of Intervention? What's the history of U.S. relations with Somalia? What's being left out of the media images from Somalia? Does military intervention solve the long-term crisis of hunger? What are the long-term implications of the intervention for Somalia and Africa? Does this intervention represent a new model for U.S. policy abroad? Should we make a connection between the media's presentation of "roving bands of young thugs" in Somalia and the portrayal of inner-city youth in the U.S.? Panel speakers to be announced. 7-10 p.m. Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Van Buren St., Room 2535. Sponsored by One Village and Pledge of Resistance. For information call (312) 663-4399.

▷ WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 1, 1993

IS A DEMOCRATIC FOREIGN POLICY POSSIBLE? The Clinton Administration and the Developing World, a forum to help orient Clinton Adminis-

tration policy toward the developing world in a progressive direction and to call media attention to some or the larger, structural problems facing the developing world. The Institute for Policy Studies, the Center for Democracy in the Americas, and the Nation Institute are co-sponsoring this free event.

This panel discussion will be held at the Marvin Center Auditorium on the campus of George Washington University. Among the panelists are Holly Burkhalter from Human Rights Watch and William LeoGrande from American University.

For more information contact Ona Alston at 202-234-9382, ext. 221 or Van Gosse at 202-452-8628.

▷ HYATTSVILLE, MD

February 7 - 13, 1993

HAITI SOLIDARITY WEEK. On February 7, 1986, the Haitian people liberated themselves from the brutal Duvalier dictatorship which had repressed them for 30 years with the support of the U.S. government.

On February 7, 1991, a hopeful Haitian people inaugurated progressive priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide as their first democratically elected President. A brutal coup d'état halted the democratic process and a reign of terror exists today. Join us by holding a public forum, religious service, demonstration or other activity to put Haiti in the political spotlight. For more information contact the Quixote Center/Haiti Reborn, Box 5206, Hyattsville, MD 20782. (301) 699-0042. Sponsored by: Americans for Aristide, Chicago Coalition for Democracy in Haiti, CALC, Haiti Communications Project, Pax Christi USA, Quixote Center/Haiti Reborn, Washington Office on Haiti.

With Apologies to Aesop

Once upon a time in the ancient city of Jerusalem, three sons were born: one a Jew, one a Christian and one a Moslem.

The old woman in charge of the nursery could not see well and, alas, the three babies were mixed up.

The Jew was taken to a Moslem household, the Christian to a Jewish home and the Moslem for baptism in a Christian family.

So it came to pass that when the three boys grew to manhood, there was bad blood and much hate among Jew, Christian and Moslem, so that the Jew raised as a Moslem slew the Moslem of Christian birth. The Christian, son of Islam, put to sword the Jew born of Christ, and the Moslem, sired by a Jew, strangled the Christian born of Islam.

In the name of all merciful God - Allah - Jehovah - amid great misery and loud lament - the land was drenched with blood.

Moral: Life without religion is better, much better.

— Nicholas Stephen Poluhoff

